

Literary Treasures
of 1929

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of
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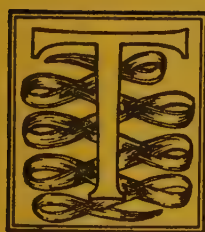
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The Usual Introduction

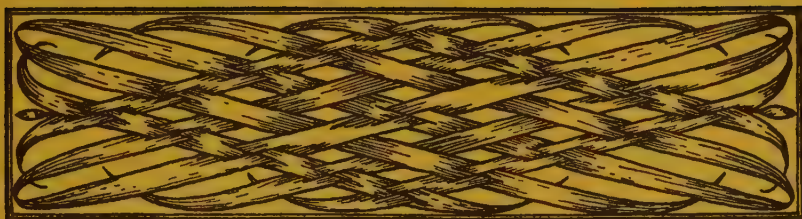
By Ray Long



HIS looks like quite a sizable book, and it is. Yet, in selecting the material for it, I kept wishing all the time that I had about three times as much space. I should have liked to give you all of Mr. Coolidge's autobiography and all of Emil Ludwig's "Life of Lincoln." To have done that, however, would have meant a departure from the purpose of the volume.

We strive in this annual book to give you a cross-section of the material which makes *Cosmopolitan* the magazine that *Cosmopolitan* is. To do that we select one item from each issue, the unit from that issue which seems to us to be most representative of the character of the publication.

We send it to you with the hope that you will enjoy reading it as much as we enjoy sending it.



Old Folks' Xmas

By Ring W. Lardner



TOM and Grace Carter sat in their living room on Christmas Eve, sometimes talking, sometimes pretending to read and all the time thinking things they didn't want to think. Their two children, Junior, aged nineteen, and Grace, two years younger, had come home that day from their schools for the Christmas vacation. Junior was in his first year at the university and Grace attending a boarding school that would fit her for college.

I won't call them Grace and Junior any more, though that is the way they had been christened. Junior had changed his name to Ted and Grace was now Caroline, and thus they insisted on being addressed, even by their parents. This was one of the things Tom and Grace the elder were thinking of as they sat in their living room Christmas Eve.

Other university freshmen who lived here had returned on the twenty-first, the day when the vacation was supposed to begin. Ted had telegraphed that he

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would be three days late owing to a special examination which, if he passed it, would lighten the terrific burden of the next term. He had arrived at home looking so pale, heavy-eyed and shaky that his mother doubted the wisdom of the concentrated mental effort, while his father secretly hoped the stuff had been non-poisonous and would not have lasting effects. Caroline, too, had been behind schedule, explaining that her laundry had gone astray and she had not dared trust others to trace it for her.

Grace and Tom had attempted, with fair success, to conceal their disappointment over this delayed homecoming and had continued with their preparations for a Christmas that would thrill their children and consequently themselves. They had bought an imposing lot of presents, costing twice or three times as much as had been Tom's father's annual income when Tom was Ted's age, or Tom's own income a year ago, before General Motors' acceptance of his new weatherproof paint had enabled him to buy this suburban home and luxuries such as his own parents and Grace's had never dreamed of, and to give Ted and Caroline advantages that he and Grace had perforce gone without.

Behind the closed door of the music room was the elaborately decked tree. The piano and piano bench and the floor around the tree were covered with beribboned packages of all sizes, shapes and weights, one of them addressed to Tom, another to Grace, a few to the servants and the rest to Ted and Caroline. A huge box contained a sealskin coat for Caroline, a coat that had cost as much

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as the Carters had formerly paid a year for rent. Even more expensive was a "set" of jewelry consisting of an opal brooch, a bracelet of opals and gold filigree, and an opal ring surrounded by diamonds.

Grace always had preferred opals to any other stone, but now that she could afford them, some inhibition prevented her from buying them for herself; she could enjoy them much more adorning her pretty daughter. There were boxes of silk stockings, lingerie, gloves and handkerchiefs. And for Ted, a three-hundred-dollar watch, a de-luxe edition of Balzac, an expensive bag of shiny new steel-shafted golf clubs and the last word in portable phonographs.

But the big surprise for the boy was locked in the garage, a black Gorham sedan, a model more up to date and better-looking than Tom's own year-old car that stood beside it. Ted could use it during the vacation if the mild weather continued and could look forward to driving it around home next spring and summer, there being a rule at the university forbidding undergraduates the possession or use of private automobiles.

Every year for sixteen years, since Ted was three and Caroline one, it had been the Christmas Eve custom of the Carters to hang up their children's stockings and fill them with inexpensive toys. Tom and Grace had thought it would be fun to continue the custom this year; the contents of the stockings—a mechanical negro dancing doll, music boxes, a kitten that meowed when you pressed a spot on her back, et cetera—would make the "kids" laugh. And one of Grace's first pronouncements to her

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returned offspring was that they must go to bed early so Santa Claus would not be frightened away.

But it seemed they couldn't promise to make it so terribly early. They both had long-standing dates in town. Caroline was going to dinner and a play with Beatrice Murdock and Beatrice's nineteen-year-old brother Paul. The latter would call for her in his car at half past six. Ted had accepted an invitation to see the hockey match with two classmates, Herb Castle and Bernard King. He wanted to take his father's Gorham, but Tom told him untruthfully that the foot-brake was not working; Ted must be kept out of the garage till tomorrow morning.

Ted and Caroline had taken naps in the afternoon and gone off together in Paul Murdock's stylish roadster, giving their word that they would be back by midnight or a little later and that tomorrow night they would stay home.

And now their mother and father were sitting up for them, because the stockings could not be filled and hung till they were safely in bed, and also because trying to go to sleep is a painful and hopeless business when you are kind of jumpy.

"What time is it?" asked Grace, looking up from the third page of a book that she had begun to "read" soon after dinner.

"Half past two," said her husband. (He had answered the same question every fifteen or twenty minutes since midnight.)

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"You don't suppose anything could have happened?" said Grace.

"We'd have heard if there had," said Tom.

"It isn't likely, of course," said Grace, "but they might have had an accident some place where nobody was there to report it or telephone or anything. We don't know what kind of a driver the Murdock boy is."

"He's Ted's age. Boys that age may be inclined to drive too fast, but they drive pretty well."

"How do you know?"

"Well, I've watched some of them drive."

"Yes, but not all of them."

"I doubt whether anybody in the world has seen every nineteen-year-old boy drive."

"Boys these days seem so kind of irresponsible."

"Oh, don't worry! They probably met some of their young friends and stopped for a bite to eat or something." Tom got up and walked to the window with studied carelessness. "It's a pretty night," he said. "You can see every star in the sky."

But he wasn't looking at the stars. He was looking down the road for headlights. There were none in sight and after a few moments he returned to his chair.

"What time is it?" asked Grace.

"Twenty-two of," he said.

"Of what?"

"Of three."

"Your watch must have stopped. Nearly an hour ago you told me it was half past two."

"My watch is all right. You probably dozed off."

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"I haven't closed my eyes."

"Well, it's time you did. Why don't you go to bed?"

"Why don't *you*?"

"I'm not sleepy."

"Neither am I. But honestly, Tom, it's silly for you to stay up. I'm just doing it so I can fix the stockings, and because I feel so wakeful. But there's no use of you losing your sleep."

"I couldn't sleep a wink till they're home."

"That's foolishness! There's nothing to worry about. They're just having a good time. You were young once yourself," said Grace.

"That's just it! When I was young, I was young." He picked up his paper and tried to get interested in the shipping news.

"What time is it?" asked Grace.

"Five minutes of three."

"Maybe they're staying at the Murdocks' all night, Tom."

"They'd have let us know."

"They were afraid to wake us up, telephoning."

At three-twenty a car stopped at the front gate.

"There they are!"

"I told you there was nothing to worry about."

Tom went to the window. He could just discern the outlines of the Murdock boy's roadster, whose lighting system seemed to have broken down.

"He hasn't any lights," said Tom. "Maybe I'd better go out and see if I can fix them."

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"No, don't!" said Grace sharply. "He can fix them himself. He's just saving them while he stands still."

"Why don't they come in?"

"They're probably making plans."

"They can make them in here. I'll go out and tell them we're still up."

"No, don't!" said Grace as before, and Tom obediently remained at the window.

It was nearly four when the car's lights flashed on and the car drove away. Caroline walked into the house and stared dazedly at her parents.

"Heavens! What are you doing up?"

Tom was about to say something, but Grace forestalled him.

"We were talking over old Christmases," she said. "Is it late?"

"I haven't any idea," said Caroline.

"Where is Ted?"

"Isn't he home? I haven't seen him since we dropped him at the hockey place."

"Well, you go right to bed," said her mother. "You must be worn out."

"I am, kind of. We danced after the play. What time is breakfast?"

"Eight o'clock."

"Oh, Mother, can't you make it nine?"

"I guess so. You used to want to get up early on Christmas."

"I know, but——"

"Who brought you home?" asked Tom.

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"Why, Paul Murdock—and Beatrice."

"You look rumpled."

"They made me sit in the 'rumple' seat."

She laughed at her joke, said good night and went upstairs. She had not come even within hand-shaking distance of her father and mother.

"The Murdocks," said Tom, "must have great manners, making their guest ride in that uncomfortable seat."

Grace was silent.

"You go to bed, too," said Tom. "I'll wait for Ted."

"You couldn't fix the stockings."

"I won't try. We'll have time for that in the morning; I mean, later in the morning."

"I'm not going to bed till you do," said Grace.

"All right, we'll both go. Ted ought not to be long now. I suppose his friends will bring him home. We'll hear him when he comes in."

There was no chance not to hear him when, at ten minutes before six, he came in. He had done his Christmas shopping late and brought home a package.

Grace was downstairs again at half past seven, telling the servants breakfast would be postponed till nine. She nailed the stockings beside the fireplace, went into the music room to see that nothing had been disturbed and removed Ted's hat and overcoat from where he had carefully hung them on the hall floor.

Tom appeared a little before nine and suggested that the children ought to be awakened.

"I'll wake them," said Grace, and went upstairs. She opened Ted's door, looked, and softly closed it again.

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She entered her daughter's room and found Caroline semiconscious.

"Do I have to get up now? Honestly I can't eat anything. If you could just have Molla bring me some coffee. Ted and I are both invited to the Murdocks' for breakfast at half past twelve, and I could sleep for another hour or two."

"But dearie, don't you know we have Christmas dinner at one?"

"It's a shame, Mother, but I thought of course our dinner would be at night."

"Don't you want to see your presents?"

"Certainly I do, but can't they wait?"

Grace was about to go to the kitchen to tell the cook that dinner would be at seven instead of one, but she remembered having promised Signe the afternoon and evening off, as a cold, light supper would be all anyone wanted after the heavy midday meal.

Tom and Grace breakfasted alone and once more sat in the living room, talking, thinking and pretending to read.

"You ought to speak to Caroline," said Tom.

"I will, but not today. It's Christmas."

"And I intend to say a few words to Ted," Tom announced.

"Yes, dear, you must. But not today."

"I suppose they'll be out again tonight."

"No, they promised to stay home. We'll have a nice cozy evening."

"Don't bet too much on that," said Tom.

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At noon the "children" made their entrance. They responded to their parents' salutations with almost the proper warmth. Ted declined a cup of coffee and he and Caroline apologized for making a "breakfast" date at the Murdocks'.

"Sis and I both thought you'd be having dinner at seven, as usual."

"We've always had it at one o'clock on Christmas," said Tom.

"I'd forgotten it was Christmas," said Ted.

"Well, those stockings ought to remind you."

Ted and Caroline looked at the bulging stockings.

"Isn't there a tree?" asked Caroline.

"Of course," said her mother. "But the stockings come first."

"We've only a little time," said Caroline. "We'll be terribly late as it is. So can't we see the tree now?"

"I guess so," said Grace, and led the way into the music room.

The servants were summoned and the tree stared at and admired.

"You must open your presents," said Grace to her daughter.

"I can't open them all now," said Caroline. "Tell me which is special."

The cover was removed from the huge box and Grace held up the coat.

"Oh, Mother!" said Caroline. "A sealskin coat!"

"Put it on," said her father.

"Not now. We haven't time."

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"Then look at this!" said Grace, and opened the case of jewels.

"Oh, Mother! Opals!" said Caroline.

"They're my favorite stone," said Grace quietly.

"If nobody minds," said Ted, "I'll postpone my personal investigations till we get back. I know I'll like everything you've given me. But if we have no car in working order, I've got to call a taxi and catch a train."

"You can drive in," said his father.

"Did you fix the brake?"

"I think it's all right. Come up to the garage and we'll see."

Ted got his hat and coat and kissed his mother goodbye. "Mother," he said, "I know you'll forgive me for not having any presents for you and Dad. I was so rushed the last three days at school. And I thought I'd have time to shop a little when we got in yesterday, but I was in too much of a hurry to be home. Last night, everything was closed."

"Don't worry," said Grace. "Christmas is for young people. Dad and I have everything we want."

The servants had found their gifts and disappeared, expressing effusive Scandinavian thanks.

Caroline and her mother were left alone.

"Mother, where did the coat come from?"

"Lloyd and Henry's."

"They keep all kinds of furs, don't they?"

"Yes."

"Would you mind horribly if I exchanged this?"

"Certainly not, dear. You pick out anything you like,

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and if it's a little more expensive, it won't make any difference. We can go in town tomorrow or next day. But don't you want to wear your opals to the Murdocks'?"

"I don't believe so. They might get lost or something. And I'm not—well, I'm not so crazy about——"

"I think they can be exchanged, too," said Grace. "You run along now and get ready to start."

Caroline obeyed with alacrity, and Grace spent a welcome moment by herself.

Tom opened the garage door.

"Why, you've got two cars!" said Ted.

"The new one isn't mine," said Tom.

"Whose is it?"

"Yours. It's the new model."

"Dad, that's wonderful! But it looks just like the old one."

"Well, the old one's pretty good. Just the same, yours is better. You'll find that out when you drive it. Hop in and get started. I had her filled with gas."

"I think I'd rather drive the old one."

"Why?"

"Well, what I really wanted, Dad, was a Barnes sport roadster, something like Paul Murdock's; only a different color scheme. And if I don't drive this Gorham at all, maybe you could get them to take it back or make some kind of a deal with the Barnes people."

Tom didn't speak till he was sure of his voice. Then: "All right, son. Take my car and I'll see what can be done about yours."

Caroline, waiting for Ted, remembered something

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and called to her mother. "Here's what I got for you and Dad," she said. "It's two tickets to 'Jolly Jane,' the play I saw last night. You'll love it!"

"When are they for?" asked Grace.

"Tonight," said Caroline.

"But dearie," said her mother, "we don't want to go out tonight, when you promised to stay home."

"We'll keep our promise," said Caroline, "but the Murdocks may drop in and bring some friends and we'll dance and there'll be music. Ted and I thought you'd rather be away so our noise wouldn't disturb you."

"It was sweet of you to do this," said her mother, "but your father and I don't mind noise as long as you're enjoying yourselves."

"It's time anyway that you and Dad had a treat."

"The real treat," said Grace, "would be to spend a quiet evening here with just you two."

"The Murdocks practically invited themselves and I couldn't say no after they'd been so nice to me. And honestly, Mother, you'll love this play!"

"Will you be home for supper?"

"I'm pretty sure we will, but if we're a little late, don't you and Dad wait for us. Take the seven-twenty so you won't miss anything. The first act is really the best. We probably won't be hungry, but have Signe leave something out for us in case we are."

Tom and Grace sat down to the elaborate Christmas dinner and didn't make much impression on it. Even if they had had any appetite, the sixteen-pound turkey would have looked almost like new when they had eaten

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their fill. Conversation was intermittent and related chiefly to Signe's excellence as a cook and the weather. Children and Christmas were barely touched on.

Tom merely suggested that on account of its being a holiday and their having theater tickets, they ought to take the six-ten and eat supper at the Metropole. His wife said no; Ted and Caroline might come home and be disappointed at not finding them.

The afternoon was the longest Grace had ever known. The children were still absent at seven and she and Tom taxied to the train. Neither talked much on the way to town. As for the play, which Grace was sure to love, it turned out to be a rehash of "Cradle Snatchers" and "Sex," retaining the worst features of each.

When it was over, Tom said: "Now I'm inviting you to the Cove Club. You didn't eat any breakfast or dinner or supper and I can't have you starving to death on a feast day. Besides, I'm thirsty as well as hungry."

They ordered the special *table d'hôte* and struggled hard to get away with it. Tom drank six high balls, but they failed to produce the usual effect of making him jovial. Grace had one high ball and some kind of cordial that gave her a warm, contented feeling for a moment. But the warmth and contentment left her before the train was halfway home.

The living room looked as if Von Kluck's army had just passed through. Ted and Caroline had kept their promise up to a certain point. They had spent part of the evening at home, and the Murdocks must have brought all their own friends and everybody else's, judging from

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results. The tables and floors were strewn with empty glasses, ashes and cigaret stubs. The stockings had been torn off their nails and the wrecked contents were all over the place.

Tom led his wife into the music room.

"You never took the trouble to open your own present," he said.

"And I think there's one for you, too," said Grace. "They didn't come in here," she added, "so I guess there wasn't much dancing or music."

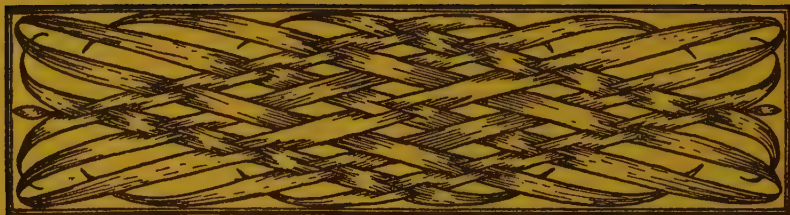
Tom found his gift from Grace, a set of diamond studs and cuff buttons for festive wear. Grace's present from him was an opal ring.

"Oh, Tom!" she said.

"We'll have to go out somewhere tomorrow night, so I can break these in," said Tom.

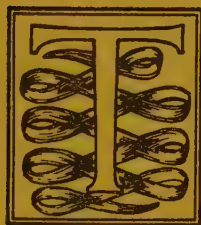
"Well, if we do that, we'd better get a good night's rest."

"I'll beat you upstairs," said Tom.



If I Were A Young Man Today

By Andrew W. Mellon



THE question is often asked whether a young man's opportunities are as great today as they were a generation or two ago. My own view is that they are infinitely more varied, the rewards are greater and the enjoyment is more immediate than was the case fifty years ago. At that time this country and the rest of the world, also, were more or less on a one-man basis. Business was on a small scale and was carried on by partnerships or individuals.

It was easier perhaps for a man to become the proprietor of a small business, either mercantile or manufacturing, or to establish himself as a lawyer or a banker or a farmer. We had not come to the end of "free land," so that the restless man or the misfit could always fall back upon this as an outlet.

But, in proportion to the population and the existing wealth, competition then was just as keen as it is now—perhaps more so. The standard of living was low, as compared with today. The opportunities for free education, and especially for technical or professional training, were

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not so great as now; and business openings, of course, were fewer because business itself had not developed either in volume or in variety as we know it today.

Many of our great industries, such as steel, aluminum, glass, oil and the telephone, were still in their infancy. The automobile industry, with all the jobs which it created in connection with manufacture, distribution and upkeep, had not been thought of.

Most of the opportunities open to a young man today in the field of electricity did not exist. It is necessary only to name these industries for us to realize how greatly the world has changed and how vast are the opportunities for success now as compared with a time which many of us still can remember.

The fact that business has grown in volume and operates in larger units, and that chain stores and large distributing concerns have wiped out some of the one-man businesses, does not mean that a young man with no financial backing, but with character, ability, energy and education, is any less circumscribed in getting a start now than in the earlier days. Quite the contrary is the case.

It is true that, instead of starting out in business for himself as formerly, he frequently goes today into a large established business, engaged in making automobiles or steel rails or radio apparatus or electrical appliances or many other things. The criticism usually made is that in such a large concern he has less individual responsibility than in a small one-man business where his success depends entirely upon himself.

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But it should be pointed out that, as part of a large organization, adequately financed and directed by men in touch with market conditions throughout the world, the average man's chance of failure is far less than would be the case outside. I remember the time when we lived in a world of small competing units and it seemed to me that the casualty list was very great.

Today there are still plenty of opportunities for a man to start his own business; and, of course, professional opportunities are greater than ever. In so far as labor is concerned, the average workman has profited greatly by the change in attitude on the part of both employer and employee and particularly on the part of the labor unions.

There was a time when a member of the unions was held down to a standard of production that was usually below his own capacity. Today it is generally recognized that increased efficiency pays, because greater production per capita means larger profits for the company and higher wages for the workman.

In addition to this, many companies that I know of have instituted profit-sharing arrangements, so that both officers and men participate in the increased profits to the extent that their own efforts have contributed. All of this directly stimulates individual initiative and is responsible for much of the progress which our country is making today.

It all goes to prove also that the same rule of success holds good now as it always did, and that is, that whether a man makes good or not depends almost entirely upon

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himself. The fact that the young man has a father or an uncle who is the head of the business or owns a large part of the stock does not mean that he enjoys an overwhelming advantage in the race for success. Business openings are not saved for sons or nephews or cousins, as in the Old World, where opportunities to get a start are fewer and harder to find.

Here in America, we are still far from overcrowded. If we have not yet achieved that equality of opportunity which is the aim toward which we have been striving, at least we can say that there is no dearth of opportunity for the average man or woman.

Business here is democratic and is run on merit alone. Dead wood is soon eliminated, and the man who can contribute most to the success of the business is given his chance to run it.

I know one case where a man who had built up a great bank ardently desired his only son to succeed him. But the son, although a man of character and intelligence, did not have the particular qualifications needed in the bank, and his father, recognizing that fact, made other arrangements for his son and pushed ahead a young man who had nothing but his own native ability and character to recommend him.

This is true of the heads of most of our great banks and of our business and industrial concerns. It is true also of our leaders in public life, of our professional men and of our successful writers. They are invariably men who have fitted themselves by study and hard work so that they might be ready for the opportunity when it came.

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They are the best proofs that America is still the land of opportunity.

I would not exchange the period in which I have lived for any other in the world's history. I have seen come about most of those changes in our national life of which I have been speaking. But, if I were given the opportunity to exchange my own period of life during the last fifty years for any other time, I would choose, without hesitation, the next half-century and needless to say I would live it in America.

The opportunities which have so vastly increased in the last generation are only the forerunners of the far greater ones which are opening up before our eyes. When we witness in a few years the birth of industries, such as automobile, airplane, radio, rayon and many others, it is impossible to predict what the opportunities of our children and grandchildren may be. Certainly no boy or girl in America today need envy anyone in any age or any other country his chance of success.



I Learned About God From A Negress

By Honoré Willsie Morrow



SOME people accomplish their spiritual growth gradually and painlessly. They come up from the childish plane of semisavagery as simply and surely as a fine tree develops and by middle life have established a beautiful and harmonious relationship with the heavens above and the earth beneath.

It has not been so with me. I grow (if one may call it growth!) spasmodically and with infinite travail. Each step I have made upward toward the serene blue has been accomplished only by conscious and titanic effort. I am cursed with a complete inability to take anything on faith. I must *know* or I cannot believe.

And so a great deal of my life has been a long and lonely quest after the unknowable. But not all of my life. There stand up in my memory three or four experiences wherein it seemed to me I actually visioned truth and clung to it and with agony of mind and body pulled myself upward to a firm stand upon it.

HONORÉ WILLSIE MORROW

These experiences invariably have taken place either in the mountains or on the desert, far from crowds and the smell of gasoline. It has required a vast landscape to enlarge my focus to the seeing point. Sometimes the experience has come without seeking, but of late years I have not infrequently sought the big country more or less deliberately when some spiritual problem has confronted me.

I say more or less, because in the experience I'm about to relate I didn't admit till afterward what had been my real purpose in going to Quaking Asp Canyon. I was writing a book on the early West and I wanted to reconstruct a picture of fur trapping.

I might have made my picture from memory, for I once had seen a trapper at work in the Rockies and also there are several excellent books on fur trapping extant. But back of my hanker for meticulous accuracy was another hanker. I wanted to settle a vital personal problem by looking at it against a background of untainted wilderness.

The problem was rather a curious one. A friend of mine in Boston had come to me with the story of a five-year-old boy. She was the child-placing agent for a child-adoption society and had become keenly interested in the study of subnormality.

She believed that there were numerous cases among young children where highly intelligent care on the part of a mother could save a merely subnormal case from becoming what we call idiotic. She even claimed that sometimes such a child could be brought up to normal, and she

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asked me to take this subnormal five-year-old into my home.

I had flatly refused to be interested. I had my own family and a profession to care for. And I had what was more decisive, a horror of the abnormal or subnormal. But my friend had the persistence of a highly successful agent. She actually brought the child down to New York to see me. He was a beautiful boy—little Arthur; large for his age, with gorgeous blue eyes that one could not escape or forget, they were so hungry, so bewildered.

“You see? You see?” exclaimed my friend when I commented on this look. “There’s something there—a soul struggling to thrust a curtain aside!”

“You’re a sentimental goose!” I grumbled.

“Yes, I am, thank heaven!” replied my friend, holding the stolid child close in her arms.

I shook my head. I couldn’t! It would mean hours each day, feeding, training, watching—endless patience, endless thought and endeavor. And my hands and heart already were full.

We were arguing over the matter when Esther brought in the tea tray. Esther was my colored cook; very tall, very dark, with a magnificent physique and liquid, passionate eyes. I had not asked for tea. But I had told Esther about Arthur and this was her method of breaking into the conference.

She set the tray before me, then stood staring at the child with all the negro’s love for blond beauty. After a moment, she said, “You take him, madam, and I’ll help you till he’s growed.”

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I shook my head. Esther tossed hers, disapprovingly, and went out. I turned to my friend and reiterated all my former arguments—that she'd easily find some rich person who could pay for a specialized nurse and teacher, or that he could be placed in a private school for such children; that there was a limit to my strength and the length of my working day and to my love for children; that someone else could do the job better than I.

To all of which my friend made but one answer—that mother-love was the prime requisite plus a peculiar kind of intelligence. I tried to thank her flippantly for the implied compliment, but she was affronted and carried Arthur out without a further word.

It was after this that I arranged to go to Quaking Asp Canyon through a man I knew in the Forestry Service. When I announced my prospective trip to Esther, she was on her knees scrubbing the kitchen floor. She gave me the blank look characteristic of her race when it disapproves of some vagary of my race and said, sullenly, "Yessum, I'll keep things together till you git back—if you ever do git back," and went on scrubbing.

Ten minutes later, however, she came pounding along to my study and planted herself before my desk. "Madam, I'm going out there on that trip with you," she announced.

"That's impossible, Esther!" I replied.

She settled herself more firmly before me. "Nothing's impossible the Lord wants done. He done told me out there in my kitchen to go with you. You know last time you went out in them mountains in the winter it nearly

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killed you. You ain't going out again unless I go to bring your body back. I got enough money to pay my own way."

I was absolutely firm with her, even a little irritated. She subsided sulkily and I heard no more about it.

Early in November, I started from New York and an hour after the train had left the station, Esther walked deliberately up the aisle of my car. She wore a tailored blue suit that must have taken several weeks' pay and a tailored velour hat that was precisely the right covering for her dusky head. She seated herself in my section facing me.

"I hope you don't object to colored people, madam," she said obstinately, "because I sure have got a ticket for this upper berth." And she had!

Thus Esther went to the trapping country with me.

Quaking Asp Canyon lies one hundred and fifty miles north of the railway in a forgotten section of the Rockies where there is no grazing to tempt the sheepman or cattleman and no minerals for the miner. But there are tangled forests of aspen and blue spruce, of hemlock and cottonwood, and there are rushing forest streams, and acres and acres of fern and berries in the summer and deep snows in the winter—a trappers' paradise.

The first day out of the junction, we traveled with the rural postman, making forty miles up and slowly up from brown, snowless plains to a level gray mesa at the two-thousand-foot level, and beyond this to a higher

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mesa where alfalfa stacks marked the last of the ranches. Here the postman left us and turned back.

Although I had a letter from the forester, Rancher Jones looked on us with suspicion. I think he believes to this day that I was a Prohibition agent, because I preferred coffee to raisin jack for thawing out my frozen stomach.

However, there was an advantage to us in his suspicions. He was so anxious to be rid of us that he was willing to rent us horses for the winter and to send us up to Quaking Asp Canyon in his sheep wagon driven by a Mexican in his employ.

It took us five days to complete the slow ascent to John Marston's place in Quaking Asp, following an all-but-imperceptible trail.

In the morning, when we emerged from our camp for the last lap of our trek, there lay before us to the north a line of barren peaks in black and white, buttressed by heavily forested spurs, dark green. A little to the left a deep cleft lay between two of the peaks. This the Mexican told us was a pass to the nearest town, fifty miles beyond. Beneath the pass lay Quaking Asp Canyon.

The snows were now so deep that we left the sheep wagon in the spruce grove and packed the four animals with our bags and bedding. The remainder of the journey was not difficult afoot, for we followed a well-used deer trail until we actually reached the edge of the canyon.

This was about five hundred yards in width and so thickly grown with aspen that it was not easy to distinguish the creek to which the deer slots led. We moved

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a quarter of a mile along this creek and came about dusk to a log house.

A woman opened the door to the Mexican's call and stood with the lamplight outlining a figure as magnificently proportioned as Esther's.

"Come in!" she cried. "We weren't looking for you for another two weeks. John was going to leave to meet you tomorrow. Pedro, you take the critters to the corral. You'll find John and Jackie there. They'll show you where to put the bags. Come in! My Lord! You brought a nigger with you!"

I put my hand hastily on Esther's arm. The colored woman gave Mrs. Marston a long look.

"I reckon, Miz Marston, you don't know that *nigger* is a fighting word where I come from!"

Mrs. Marston smiled at Esther. "You'll have to excuse me, miss," she said. "You know I live out of the world as much as a porcupine in a squaw tree."

"That's all right, Miz Marston," Esther smiled too. "I'm a colored woman and I ain't ashamed of it."

"Where are you going to stow us, Mrs. Marston? On the roof?" I asked, for I was perishing with cold while these social distinctions were being arranged.

The cabin contained but one room. In one corner stood a bed covered by a handsome crocheted spread. In the opposite corner, a narrow bunk with a patchwork-quilt covering. In a third corner, the kitchen stove, and in the fourth, a cupboard. The log walls were hung with a miscellany of traps, bridles, lariats, spurs, guns and colored

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calendars. Piled on boards stretched above the rafters was a huge assortment of pelts.

Mrs. Marston laughed. "I don't blame you for feeling worried. But you needn't be. There's a little cabin just a piece down the creek that was always used by a trapper from Pueblo till this winter. I cleaned that up for you. I'll go right over and get a fire lighted."

She would not permit Esther to accompany her, but pulled a ragged Mackinaw over her gingham dress and went out. She must have passed the man who came in immediately.

Tall as were Esther and Mrs. Marston, John Marston was taller. He was a lean, tanned fellow of middle age, with a drooping walrus mustache and gray eyes. He wore blue overalls and did not remove a brown cloth cap which covered his ears. But he was glad to see us and shook hands with us both, staring all the time at Esther and telling us how sorry he was he hadn't been the one to bring us in.

"Beaver is running fine and as it's still closed season on 'em I want to get all I can before a government inspector comes. Seen Mr. Stort lately?" Stort was my friend, the forester.

We were talking about Stort when the Mexican came in followed by the finest-looking boy of sixteen I had ever seen. He was shaggy and unkempt but nothing could hide the fact that Jackie was his mother in masculine form; a blue-eyed, auburn-haired boy, as beautiful as Angelo's young David. But he was bashful to the point of surliness. His mother came back before he could find

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words with which to retort to his father's reproof of his bad manners.

Esther and Mrs. Marston at once dished the supper. Fried antelope steak—it was close season for antelope, also—fried potatoes, soda biscuit, coffee, canned milk, corn sirup.

We all sat down together, Esther and the Mexican on either side of Jackie, and we all ate ravenously. I should have been glad to stay with them afterward, answering questions about New York, but I was tired almost to tears and asked to go to our cabin.

That five-minute walk remains in my mind with extraordinary clarity. I was not yet habituated to the relief from the noise and bad air of the city. It seemed to me then and still seems to me that nothing could be more exquisite than the moonlight through the black-lace beauty of the aspens.

And the silence! Oh, just for one moment now of such silence! There was a little trail through knee-deep snow that crossed the icebound creek where the hole broken for the night's watering was already glazed and that came to pause before a tiny cabin with a stick of firewood for a doorstep. I'd exchange the finest hotel suite in New York for that cabin this instant.

It was twelve feet square and contained a tiny cook-stove, two wooden bunks, a table, a cupboard and a couple of log chairs. And it contained, too, the smell of burning cedar, of bedticks fresh-filled with alfalfa hay, of adobe that plastered the chinks in wall and roof. I had a tingling sense of home-coming.

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We soon settled into a routine. We took our meals with the Marstons. They were glad of this, Mrs. Marston told Esther, for money was very scarce with them.

Esther adjusted herself cleverly. She took a great liking to Mrs. Marston, and after the light duties of our cabin were finished, she daily adjourned to the other house and proceeded to lift a part of Mrs. Marston's burdens. The Marstons had lived in this isolation for seventeen years.

My job was to ride the traps with John Marston and I made my initial trip on the second day after our arrival.

As Esther held my Mackinaw for me, she blurted out, "I want either Miz Marston or me to go with you!"

"Don't be silly, Esther," I replied. "Does Marston want to ride with a parade of women? Anyhow Mrs. Marston says that she doesn't ride any more than she can help and you'd be scared to death on these trails."

"It would sure kill me," agreed Esther, "but that man is a bad egg."

"You know, Esther, Marston had been Mr. Stort's guide for years and Mr. Stort says he's as decent and honest a fellow as ever lived."

"Nobody knows a man excepting a woman who's behind closed doors with him," declared Esther.

"Perhaps," I nodded. "But Mrs. Marston says nothing against my going with him."

Esther's great eyes took fire. "Do you reckon she'd dast?"

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"Esther," I demanded impatiently, "are you holding back something?"

"No, I'm just telling you, madam!"

"Unless you have something more than talk to give me, Esther, I'm going." I pulled my *béret* over my ears and started for the door.

As I lifted the latch, Esther muttered unwillingly, "He tried to kiss me, first night I was here. I slapped his face."

I turned to face her, feeling a little sick. On these pure mountains—so close to the heavens!

After a moment, I said, "Well, I have no fear for myself. Marston isn't that much of a fool, even if he is a whelp. And you are able to take care of Esther."

Esther's eyes held unfathomable depths. "You'd do this, madam, then call taking care of little Arthur too dirty a job?"

I turned abruptly and went out. In a short time, we were on our way.

Marston, a torn sheepskin-lined coat over his overalls, a cloth cap over his ears, led the way on Jimmy, a clumsily built sorrel that I soon discovered could follow a trail like a lynx. My horse, Molly, was only so-so.

For an hour, until we reached the first beaver trap, we did not speak. Molly-horse pegged along on Jimmy's heels, and as I watched the morning shadows among the aspens and cottonwoods, I thrust aside the memory of the child Arthur's tortured eyes and considered Esther.

I began to fear that her presence in Quaking Asp might turn out to be dynamite. Not that her relation to

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any white could be anything but decent, barring an occasional necessary lying. Esther's code demanded the strictest rectitude for the white man or woman. And with me and my family Esther was a devoted, decent, God-fearing woman.

But I had reason to know that with her own race Esther was a swashbuckling bully, utterly without morals. In other words, she led the double life that our civilization has forced on the more primitive of the negroes.

No, I had no fears that Esther would be anything but disgusted by Marston. But that her presence might make trouble between the trapper and his wife was not improbable.

This is not a record of fur trapping, so I shall not go into the details of that day, or of the many subsequent days that I rode the trails after Marston. It is not a pretty work, trapping, but we women must wear furs, I suppose!

Our round covered about fifteen hard miles and it was usually dusk before we reached home with our load of wet pelts.

After the first week I told myself that whatever John Marston might be behind closed doors, on the trail he was a good man. He was silent at his work but when we ate our luncheon he talked in a ruminative way.

Usually at sunset we were at a point high on the hog-back from which we could look down into the canyon and see smoke curling above the trees. It would be twilight when we rounded the corral and saw the cabin

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windows warm and yellow. Esther was invariably on hand to rush out and pull me from my saddle, for I always reached home half frozen.

One evening, after perhaps three weeks of this, when Marston and I rounded the corral there was no light showing in his cabin window. He said nothing, however, and I stopped at my cabin where Esther greeted me as usual:

"Mrs. Marston's lamp wasn't lighted," I said as she helped me unlace my riding boots.

"No, madam?" Esther's voice showed such nice surprise that I stared at her suspiciously.

As she poured my coffee, the door opened and John Marston strode in.

"You two! Where's my wife?" he shouted.

"I haven't the remotest idea," I replied.

He turned to Esther. "Where is she, *nigger*?"

I caught Esther's hand as she reached for the steaming coffeepot. She paused.

"Mr. Marston," I ejaculated, "show as much self-control as Esther does! Where is Jackie?"

He glowered at Esther, but answered, "Gone. I've known right along that devil of yours was making trouble for me."

Esther now spoke. "I never done a thing but listen to Miz Marston. Why should I mix up with white folks' troubles?"

"You mean to tell me you've been round here all day and didn't see her go?" roared Marston.

"That's what I mean," retorted Esther. "And I tell

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you what, mister, if you don't change your voice to me, I'll tell the madam all I've learned about you."

Marston exchanged glare for glare with Esther. Then he turned to me.

"Why did you bring this woman out here?"

"I won't know that," I replied, "until the end of our visit. Mr. Marston, hadn't you better see what preparations they made? It may give you an idea."

"Aw, teach your teacher! They took two horses and the pack mule and my summer hunting outfit."

It was on the tip of my tongue to ask him why he wasn't trailing them. But I bit back the words because I was conscious suddenly that I wanted the pair to escape. Marston had tried to kiss Esther! While I gazed at him with distaste, he plunged out of the door.

I turned to Esther. "You are making me serious trouble, my dear."

"I knowed she was going," said Esther, "but I argued with her all day yesterday not to go."

"*Not* to go?" I repeated.

"Yes, madam. She ain't no right to go. It's all right for us colored folks to run away from trouble, but you whites ought to be ashamed to do it. God, He knows how hard it is for us to be decent. But He looks to the whites to set us the example, and anyhow—I didn't see them go. I had a blanket over the window."

"Just what was Mrs. Marston's trouble, Esther?" I asked.

"She seen him try to kiss me that time. Seems she's had a lot of trouble like that with him and she's chock-

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a-block full. But when she went after him about it day before yesterday, he kicked her. Jackie, he tried to help her and there was a mess."

Here the door opened again and Marston put his head in. "Look here," he said, "you come with me. She might listen to you."

"Have some sense, Mr. Marston!" I protested. "I can't interfere. If your wife has taken such a step as this—a woman of her type—she must feel that she's had some terrible provocation."

"A woman of what type?" sneered Marston.

"She seems to me as fine and faithful as she is beautiful. Personally"—summoning all my courage—"I won't lift a finger to bring her back."

He banged the door. A moment later we heard his horse trot past the corral. Esther then went over to the main cabin and brought back the makings of a supper and breakfast for us. She was sullen and I made no attempt to break through her silence. I was very uneasy.

Shortly she placed fried mush on the table and announced, "Supper is served, madam."

"So you think it's wrong for Mrs. Marston to leave her husband, but would be all right for a colored woman?" I said.

"Yes, madam!"

"For my part," I went on, "I think Mrs. Marston had a perfect right to run away. She couldn't keep her self-respect, or her son's, and stay. Has Marston been in the habit of abusing her?"

"No, ma'am! He never did before, though he's

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threatened to. Like last summer when he ran after some squaws camped near here. She told him she wouldn't stand it and he acted like he was crazy. She'd stick it out herself, if it wasn't for the boy. She says it's ruining him, seeing his father so. He's going to take this bad, Marston. For all his ructions, he's crazy about Miz Marston."

"I think she ought to have run away long ago," I repeated.

"Yes, madam, you would think so. If you'll excuse my saying it, you've been running away ever since I knowed you."

"From what?" I gasped.

"From God," replied Esther. "You owe it to God to take that child and raise him and that's why you came out here to this misery on the mountain tops. You run away from little Arthur, madam, and that'll be written up against you on the Judgment Day."

She put another twist of cedar in the stove and resumed her stance before the oven. I pushed away my unfinished plate. And there was silence.

It was a long half-hour before I found words. Then I said, haltingly enough, "Esther, if I could believe that God is aware of my little doings—well, it would make life a very different matter for me."

"Would it make you take that little child Arthur?" demanded Esther fiercely.

I sighed and repeated the question to myself. Would it? If that Ultimate Cause in which I had found faith only after many years of atheism were a conscious entity

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—but my mind would not compass the conception!

“What do you think God is like?” I asked.

“God is a spirit like the Bible says,” replied Esther.

She would have said more, but someone fumbled at the latch and pushed the door open. Jackie entered and stood blinking at the candle. Each eyelash was an icicle. From the knit muffler round his neck dangled threads of crystal. His sheepskin chaps were caked with snow as if he’d ridden far through deep drifts.

“Where’s your mother, Jackie?” I demanded.

“She got bad with that old pain in her back and just before sundown I put her in Rand’s empty cabin, a mile this side of the Pass. She’s awful sick and I had to come back for help.”

“Is there heat in the cabin?” I asked.

Jackie nodded. “She won’t freeze. What I’m afraid of is my father finding her.”

I saw that his chin was trembling. My heart went out in pity to the boy.

“Esther, give him some coffee,” I said, beginning to pull on my boots.

“Madam,” Esther protested, “I’ll go up there! It’ll kill you after your hard day.”

“You are no good on the trail, Esther,” I replied. “Besides,” smiling, “I must show you that I don’t always run away.”

She scowled. “You know I didn’t mean that kind of running, madam! You boy,” turning to Jackie, “what you want us up there for?”

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"I want you there when Dad finds her, both of you. You've gotta come!" His eyes were desperate.

"I reckon we gotta," grunted Esther, muttering something about white folks' troubles.

As we hurriedly wrapped ourselves for the bitter journey, Jackie explained to us that Rand's cabin was eight miles up toward the Pass. He and his mother had followed the trapping trail for the first three miles, which fact must have delayed Marston in picking up their tracks.

There was only one horse left for Esther's use—old Dave. She was afraid to mount my Molly-horse, whose one sign of life was that she shied a bit. Old Dave was rawboned and stiff-legged and sixteen hands high. It took Jackie and me five minutes to work Esther up into the saddle. But finally we were off, Esther following Jackie, and I at the rear.

It was about ten below zero and clear moonlight. When we left the canyon and began the ascent of the hogback, I was astonished at the distance the eye could travel. As we drew up at the top of the ridge, the Pass, five miles away to the north, seemed within stone's throw.

From the glazed spine of the hogback, Jackie led us to a sloping terrace dotted with cedar and with red outcroppings of sandstone jutting from the snow. Slowly and slowly higher, till each breath drawn by our horses was a groan.

The trail upward looked like a cobweb clinging to an

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almost perpendicular wall. However, our horses reluctantly followed Jackie's.

But it was beautiful! I dared not look down, but I dared twist in my saddle to look back at the exquisite blue and lavender silhouettes of mountain ranges ever increasing in number behind us. We had covered about six miles when, on a turn of the trail that edged a straight drop into nothingness, Molly-horse tried to turn around.

I didn't argue with her, but slipped off and tried to lead her. She wouldn't be led. Jackie, looking back, shouted at me fiercely:

"Ain't you got sense enough to stick to your horse on a trail like this? You git right back!"

I was too cold to reply. But I kept on leading. Molly looked a hundred feet high at the saddle! However, Jackie was right. I had not gone far when I slipped terribly on my half-frozen feet. Then I turned ferociously on poor Molly and banged her on the nose until she agreed to let me mount without backing. During this interlude Esther prayed, huddled on old Dave.

Up and up, the Pass growing wider above us, the wind heavier, the cold more intense. It was about midnight when we reached the cabin.

Esther and I were almost helpless with cold and fatigue. Jackie pulled us off our nags without ceremony and led the horses into the shelter of the cedars, while we stumbled into the cabin.

It was lighted by a candle in a miner's candlestick. Esther and I paused, startled, just within the door. John

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Marston was brushing the snow from his knees before the fireplace! Jackie, following us in, rushed across the room to place himself beside his mother, who lay under a blanket on the bunk.

For a moment we stared at one another, Marston glaring mostly at his son.

I tried to speak normally. "Jackie says you are sick, Mrs. Marston, so we came up to see if we could help. Did you sprain your back?"

"I've had a floating kidney since Jackie was born," she replied, "and riding about kills me."

"Good thing, it seems," volunteered Marston.

"You shut up!" blazed Jackie.

His father gave him a look of cold fury. "Nice son you are! I'll show you just how much I appreciate you. Step outside with me while they fix your mother up!"

Esther, who had been examining the crude crane in the fireplace, straightened up and drawled: "No, he won't go with you, Mr. Marston, less'n you want me to talk to the madam."

Marston laughed uneasily and shrugged his shoulders. But he made no further gesture toward Jackie. Instead, he squatted against the wall opposite the fireplace. There was no furniture in the cabin save the bunk.

"Jackie," I said, "see if you can heat some snow-water. Mrs. Marston, won't hot compresses ease you as much as anything?"

"Yes! Yes! Oh, I do thank you for everything!" she exclaimed.

For an hour Jackie, Esther and I relayed steaming

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towels from the lard pail on the crane to Edith Marston's body. At last she relaxed and begged us to rest. We packed her with a couple of hot-water bottles, and then Esther and I seated ourselves against the wall on either side of the fire. Jackie perched beside his mother.

"Well," drawled Marston, "what do you smart women think you are going to do next?"

Something in his ugly voice made me snap back: "Help your wife over the Pass."

He laughed. "Now you know you're talking like a fool, don't you?"

"I'm a fool to mix in your affairs," I admitted.

"No, you ain't," said Edith Marston. "You and Esther are angels."

Esther and I smiled, but Esther shook her head and said, "Something makes me tell you again, Miz Marston, that I don't think you should run away, though you know I hate him," jerking her square black chin at Marston.

I sighed. It was evident that Esther proposed to mix in and I doubted whether any of us could stop her.

The wind howled and pounded against the cabin. Snowflakes drove through chinks in the roof and wall.

Esther began to speak slowly: "I can't read or write. But I go to church and I knows a lot of truth. It was you white folks that inherited the earth, not us. Back in them old days when God talked, did He talk to the colored folks? No! He talked to you all and told you what to do to get to Heaven while He left us naked down there in Africa.

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"Now He had a reason for that. It was so's you'd set us an example. We ain't got as much brain as you-all. He knowed it wouldn't do no good to go down to Africa and read us the Ten Commandments. No! He gave 'em to you and told you to preach 'em to all the earth. How have you done it? You-all, setting right here in this cabin, how you done it?"

She gave each of us in turn a long piercing look and not one of us stirred. She went on:

"You think it was just pig luck sent madam and me 'cross the earth and clean up to the top rung of God's footstool here where we could peep into Saint Peter's key bag? I tell you God Almighty brung us to this very spot, tonight, to settle what He was troubling us with. Miz Marston, you can't run away from that there scoundrel and expect God not to ask you what you done with the job He give you. Don't you know that?"

I expected Marston to come to his feet. He did not stir. His wife lifted her head.

"Esther," she said earnestly, "I don't think God pays any attention to little things like my troubles. All I believe is He gave us life and lets us do what we want to with it. And I can't ever do any good where John is."

"When Judgment Day comes," returned Esther, "the Almighty ain't going to say to us, 'Here, you, show me the good things you done!' He's going to rip open your shroud and say, 'Here, let me look at your scars!'"

I drew a quick breath but could not speak. We all were silent, enumerating our scars!

Coyotes, yelping desperately, circled the cabin. The

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room, the anxious, uneasy faces of my companions gradually became dim for me as I pondered on Esther's last words. It seemed to me that I was up in the Pass, alone in the lavender infinity across which swept the ageless wind.

Surely, if God could be reached from any spot on earth, it was here—it was here. Could He be conscious of me, yearning toward Him from the mountain top?

Scars! It had seemed to me that as I had worked my way through the years I had accumulated more than my share of them. Their number was one of my excuses for not taking little Arthur. And yet, when one thought of offering those scars, say, in comparison with nail holes in palms and feet and a thorn-torn brow, one hesitated. What could one offer God? Did God want my offering?

Didn't it come to this? If one believed in God, in a God of Whose spirit each of us was a part, then each was responsible for the integrity of his portion of that spirit. And on the degree that each kept the integrity of his portion, did not the upward movement of the race from the slime to the blue depend?

Suddenly Marston spoke. "What're you going to do, Edith?"

Edith Marston did not look at her husband. "Esther," she asked, "why should I be the only one you think owes something to God? How about my husband?"

"He owes a lot more'n you do, Miz Marston," replied Esther. "But what he owes and what you owe is separate and you can't neither of you pay for the other. When I gets up there to Him, I'm a-going to have many a dirty

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sin to answer for a-covering up my scars, and I better not try to get out of 'em by saying, 'Lord, look at what one of my husbands done, don't look at Esther!' "

"But you think little Arthur is my business, Esther?" I asked, smiling a little.

"Yessum, I certainly do. I can't say it plain because it ain't simple like Miz Marston's trouble, but I know as well as God's my Maker that little Arthur ought to be one of your scars."

"And who is Arthur?" demanded Edith Marston.

Moved by an unaccountable impulse I told them about the child and the problem he presented to me. When I had finished, Edith Marston said reproachfully to Esther:

"And you say your poor madam ought to take that child? That she owes it to God?"

"She owes everything to God," returned Esther.

She turned toward me and joined the others in a concentrated stare. And deep within me, this is what I heard:

I owe everything to God, body, life, spirit and the lovely world through which I so haltingly make my way. Whatever I may do to help humanity on its upward march, I owe Him. To the last deep effort of the mental and spiritual power which is God within me, I must help.

Since I was peculiarly fitted to care for little Arthur, he was my job. Whatever pain he cost me—well, God would see the scars!

I rose slowly to my feet as one does when assuming a

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burden. Esther needed no words. Great tears ran down her cheeks as she shouted:

"Amen! Blessed Master, I thank You!"

"You ain't never going to do it?" protested Edith Marston.

I nodded slowly and said, "If there's any credit, which I doubt, it goes to Esther."

"I reckon it does," agreed Edith Marston.

Marston turned to his wife. "Well, Mama, do you still feel as if you wanted to try the Pass in the morning?"

"What do you mean, Papa?"

"Well, I don't take much stock in this religious talk. But nobody's ever called me a quitter, so I reckon I can scar myself up a little if it'll do you any good. If you want to go over the Pass, I won't stop you."

"You mean it would hurt you to have us go?"

"What do you think I am, a wolverene?" demanded John.

"More and more you've got to acting like one," replied Edith.

"Well," said John judicially, "you might be partly justified. I been thinking while all this talk was going on that what was really the matter with all three of us is that we've been shut up in Quaking Asp too long. You and Jackie and I might go over the Pass for the summer. And if I get to acting like a wolverene meantime, you can set a trap for me!"

Edith, face flushed, looked at her son. Jackie nodded in an embarrassed manner.

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Edith smiled at her husband. "I guess I can stand you till spring, John."

"There!" sighed Esther.

We all laughed and the tension broke.

It came on to snow at dawn. Nevertheless, we started back for the canyon and reached home at nightfall, cold but content.

A chinook wind came from the south a day or so later and on its heels came the Mexican with a month's accumulation of mail.

The bundle of mail which he placed on our cabin table did not tempt me, though I had every reason for wanting to hear from the East.

Finally, I opened the top letter. It was from my Boston friend. She told me that little Arthur had died. The woman who was caring for him had grown weary of the constant watchfulness he required and had locked him in a room alone for an hour. He had fallen from a table and broken his neck.

I put the letter back in the envelope, and as I did so, it was borne in on me that the woman who was caring for him and I shared the guilt for his death about equally. It was not a pleasant thought to contemplate.

"It wasn't to be," Esther said simply when I broke the news to her; later; then added, "I wonder why the Lord brought us out here."

"I know," I replied. "It was to teach me that I owe to God all that is in me to give."

Esther nodded, then asked wistfully, "But you won't never forget how his eyes looked, will you, madam?"

I LEARNED ABOUT GOD FROM A NEGRESS

“No! No!” I answered, and my heart twisted.
“Esther, I never shall!”

And I never have.



On Entering and Leaving The Presidency

By Calvin Coolidge



IT IS a very old saying that you never can tell what you can do until you try. The more I see of life the more I am convinced of the wisdom of that observation.

Surprisingly few men are lacking in capacity, but they fail because they are lacking in application. Either they never learn how to work, or, having learned, they are too indolent to apply themselves with the seriousness and the attention that is necessary to solve important problems.

Any reward that is worth having only comes to the industrious. The success which is made in any walk of life is measured almost exactly by the amount of hard work that is put into it.

It has undoubtedly been the lot of every native boy of the United States to be told that he will some day be President. Nearly every young man who happens to be elected a member of his State legislature is pointed to by his friends and his local newspaper as on the way to the White House.

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My own experience in this respect did not differ from that of others. But I never took such suggestions seriously, as I was convinced in my own mind that I was not qualified to fill the exalted office of President.

I had not changed this opinion after the November elections of 1919, when I was chosen Governor of Massachusetts for a second term by a majority which had only been exceeded in 1896.

When I began to be seriously mentioned by some of my friends at that time as the Republican candidate for President, it became apparent that there were many others who shared the same opinion as to my fitness which I had so long entertained.

But the coming national convention, acting in accordance with an unchangeable determination, took my destiny into its own hands and nominated me for Vice-President.

Had I been chosen for the first place, I could have accepted it only with a great deal of trepidation, but when the events of August, 1923, bestowed upon me the Presidential office, I felt at once that power had been given to me to administer it. This was not any feeling of exclusiveness. While I felt qualified to serve, I was also well aware that there were many others who were better qualified. It would be my province to get the benefit of their opinions and advice. It is a great advantage to a President, and a major source of safety to the country, for him to know that he is not a great man. When a man begins to feel that he is the only one who

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can lead in this republic, he is guilty of treason to the spirit of our institutions.

After President Harding was seriously stricken, although I noticed that some of the newspapers at once sent representatives to be near me at the home of my father in Plymouth, Vermont, the official reports which I received from his bedside soon became so reassuring that I believed all danger past.

On the night of August 2, 1923, I was awakened by my father coming up the stairs calling my name. I noticed that his voice trembled. As the only times I had ever observed that before were when death had visited our family, I knew that something of the gravest nature had occurred.

His emotion was partly due to the knowledge that a man whom he had met and liked was gone, partly to the feeling that must possess all of our citizens when the life of their President is taken from them.

But he must have been moved also by the thought of the many sacrifices he had made to place me where I was, the twenty-five-mile drives in storms and in zero weather over our mountain roads to carry me to the academy and all the tenderness and care he had lavished upon me in the thirty-eight years since the death of my mother in the hope that I might sometime rise to a position of importance, which he now saw realized.

He had been the first to address me as President of the United States. It was the culmination of the lifelong desire of a father for the success of his son.

He placed in my hands an official report and told me

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that President Harding had just passed away. My wife and I at once dressed.

Before leaving the room I knelt down and, with the same prayer with which I have since approached the altar of the church, asked God to bless the American people and give me power to serve them.

My first thought was to express my sympathy for those who had been bereaved and after that was done to attempt to reassure the country with the knowledge that I proposed no sweeping displacement of the men then in office and that there were to be no violent changes in the administration of affairs. As soon as I had dispatched a telegram to Mrs. Harding, I therefore issued a short public statement declaratory of that purpose.

Meantime, I had been examining the Constitution to determine what might be necessary for qualifying by taking the oath of office. It is not clear that any additional oath is required beyond what is taken by the Vice-President when he is sworn into office. It is the same form as that taken by the President.

Having found this form in the Constitution I had it set up on the typewriter and the oath was administered by my father in his capacity as a notary public, an office he had held for a great many years.

The oath was taken in what we always called the sitting room by the light of the kerosene lamp, which was the most modern form of lighting that had then reached the neighborhood. The Bible which had belonged to my mother lay on the table at my hand. It was not officially used, as it is not the practise in Vermont or Massachusetts

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to use a Bible in connection with the administration of an oath.

Besides my father and myself, there were present my wife, Senator Dale, who happened to be stopping a few miles away, my stenographer, and my chauffeur.

The picture of this scene has been painted with historical accuracy by an artist named Keller, who went to Plymouth for that purpose. Although the likenesses are not good, everything in relation to the painting is correct.

Where succession to the highest office in the land is by inheritance or appointment, no doubt there have been kings who have participated in the induction of their sons into their office, but in republics where the succession comes by an election I do not know of any other case in history where a father has administered to his son the qualifying oath of office which made him the chief magistrate of a nation. It seemed a simple and natural thing to do at the time, but I can now realize something of the dramatic force of the event.

This room was one which was already filled with sacred memories for me. In it my sister and my step-mother passed their last hours. It was associated with my boyhood recollections of my own mother, who sat and reclined there during her long invalid years, though she passed away in an adjoining room where my father was to follow her within three years from this eventful night.

When I started for Washington that morning I turned aside from the main road to make a short devotional visit to the grave of my mother. It had been a comfort to me during my boyhood when I was troubled to be near her

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last resting place, even in the dead of night. Some way, that morning, she seemed very near to me.

A telegram was sent to my pastor, Dr. Jason Noble Pierce, to meet me on my arrival at Washington that evening, which he did.

I found the Cabinet mostly scattered. Some members had been with the late President and some were in Europe. The Secretary of State, Mr. Hughes, and myself, at once began the preparation of plans for the funeral.

I issued the usual proclamation.

The Washington services were held in the rotunda of the Capitol, followed by a simple service and interment at Marion, Ohio, which I attended with the Cabinet and a large number of officers of the Government.

The nation was grief-stricken. Especially noticeable was the deep sympathy everyone felt for Mrs. Harding. Through all this distressing period her bearing won universal commendation. Her attitude of sympathy and affection towards Mrs. Coolidge and myself was an especial consolation to us.

The first Sunday after reaching Washington we attended services, as we were accustomed to do, at the First Congregational Church. Although I had been rather constant in my attendance, I had never joined the church.

While there had been religious services, there was no organized church society near my boyhood home. Among other things, I had some fear as to my ability to set that example which I always felt ought to denote the life of

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a church member. I am inclined to think now that this was a counsel of darkness.

This first service happened to come on communion day. Our pastor, Dr. Pierce, occupied the pulpit, and, as he can under the practise of the Congregational Church, and always does, because of his own very tolerant attitude, he invited all those who believed in the Christian faith, whether church members or not, to join in partaking of the communion.

For the first time I accepted this invitation, which I later learned he had observed, and in a few days without any intimation to me that it was to be done, considering this to be a sufficient public profession of my faith, the church voted me into its membership.

This declaration of their belief in me was a great satisfaction.

Had I been approached in the usual way to join the church after I became President, I should have feared that such action might appear to be a pose, and should have hesitated to accept. From what might have been a misguided conception I was thus saved by some influence which I had not anticipated.

But if I had not voluntarily gone to church and partaken of communion, this blessing would not have come to me.

Fate bestows its rewards on those who put themselves in the proper attitude to receive them.

During my service in Washington I had seen a large amount of Government business. Peace had been made with the Central Powers, the tariff revised, the budget

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system adopted, taxation reduced, large payments made on the national debt, the Veterans' Bureau organized, important farm legislation passed, public expenditures greatly decreased, the differences with Colombia of twenty years' standing composed, and the Washington Conference had reached an epoch-making agreement for the practical limitation of naval armaments.

It would be difficult to find two years of peacetime history in all the record of our republic that were marked with more important and far-reaching accomplishments. From my position as President of the Senate, and in my attendance upon the sessions of the Cabinet, I thus came into possession of a very wide knowledge of the details of the Government.

In spite of the remarkable record which had already been made, much remained to be done. While anything that relates to the functions of the Government is of enormous interest to me, its economic relations have always had a peculiar fascination for me.

Though these are necessarily predicated on order and peace, yet our people are so thoroughly law-abiding and our foreign relations are so happy that the problem of Government action which is to carry its benefits into the homes of all the people becomes almost entirely confined to the realm of economics.

My personal experience with business had been such as comes to a country lawyer.

My official experience with Government business had been of a wide range. As Mayor, I had charge of the financial affairs of the City of Northampton. As Lieu-

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tenant-Governor, I was Chairman of the Committee on Finance of the Governor's Council, which had to authorize every cent of the expenditures of the Commonwealth before they could be made. As Governor, I was chargeable with responsibility both for appropriations and for expenditures.

My fundamental idea of both private and public business came first from my father. He had the strong New England trait of great repugnance at seeing anything wasted. He was a generous and charitable man, but he regarded waste as a moral wrong.

Wealth comes from industry and from the hard experience of human toil. To dissipate it in waste and extravagance is disloyalty to humanity. This is by no means a doctrine of parsimony. Both men and nations should live in accordance with their means and devote their substance not only to productive industry, but to the creation of the various forms of beauty and the pursuit of culture which give adornments to the art of life.

When I became President it was perfectly apparent that the key by which the way could be opened to national progress was constructive economy. Only by the use of that policy could the high rates of taxation, which were retarding our development and prosperity, be diminished, and the enormous burden of our public debt be reduced.

Without impairing the efficient operation of all the functions of the Government, I have steadily and without ceasing pressed on in that direction. This policy has encouraged enterprise, made possible the highest rate of

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wages which have ever existed, returned large profits, brought to the homes of the people the greatest economic benefits they ever enjoyed, and given to the country as a whole an unexampled era of prosperity. This well-being of my country has given me the chief satisfaction of my administration.

One of my most pleasant memories will be the friendly relations which I have always had with the representatives of the press in Washington. I shall always remember that at the conclusion of the first regular conference I held with them at the White House office they broke into hearty applause.

I suppose that in answering their questions I had been fortunate enough to tell them what they wanted to know in such a way that they could make use of it.

While there have been newspapers which supported me, of course there have been others which opposed me, but they have usually been fair. I shall always consider it the highest tribute to my administration that the opposition have based so little of their criticism on what I have really said and done.

I have often said that there was no cause for feeling disturbed at being misrepresented in the press. It would be only when they began to say things detrimental to me which were true that I should feel alarm.

Perhaps one of the reasons I have been a target for so little abuse is because I have tried to refrain from abusing other people.

The words of the President have an enormous weight and ought not to be used indiscriminately.

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It would be exceedingly easy to set the country all by the ears and foment hatreds and jealousies, which, by destroying faith and confidence, would help nobody and harm everybody. The end would be the destruction of all progress.

While everyone knows that evils exist, there is yet sufficient good in the people to supply material for most of the comment that needs to be made.

The only way I know to drive out evil from the country is by the constructive method of filling it with good. The country is better off tranquilly considering its blessings and merits, and earnestly striving to secure more of them, than it would be in nursing hostile bitterness about its deficiencies and faults.

Notwithstanding the broad general knowledge which I had of the Government, when I reached Washington I found it necessary to make an extensive survey of the various departments to acquaint myself with details. This work had to be done intensively from the first of August to the middle of November, in order to have the background and knowledge which would enable me to discuss the state of the Union in my first Message to the Congress.

Although meantime I was pressed with invitations to make speeches, I did not accept any of them. The country was in mourning and I felt it more appropriate to make my first declaration in my Message to the Congress. Of course, I opened the Red Cross Convention in October, which was an official function for me as its President.

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I was especially fortunate in securing C. Bascom Slemp as my Secretary, who had been a member of the House for many years and had a wide acquaintance with public men and the workings of legislative machinery. His advice was most helpful. I had already served with all the members of the Cabinet, which perhaps was one reason I found them so sympathetic.

Among its membership were men of great ability who have served their country with a capacity which I do not believe was ever exceeded by any former Cabinet officers.

A large amount was learned from George Harvey, Ambassador to England, concerning the European situation. He not only had a special aptitude for gathering and digesting information of that nature, but had been located at London for two years, where most of it centered.

I called in a great many people from all the different walks of life over the country. Among the first to come voluntarily were the veteran President and the Secretary of the American Federation of Labor, Mr. Gompers and Mr. Morrison. They brought a formal resolution expressive of personal regard for me and assurance of loyal support for the Government.

Farm organizations and business men, publishers, educators, and many others—all had to be consulted.

It has been my policy to seek information and advice wherever I could find it. I have never relied on any particular person to be my unofficial adviser. I have let the merits of each case and the soundness of all advice

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speak for themselves. My counselors have been those provided by the Constitution and the law.

Due largely to this careful preparation, my Message was well received. No other public utterance of mine had been given greater approbation.

Most of the praise was sincere. But there were some quarters in the opposing party where it was thought it would be good strategy to encourage my party to nominate me, thinking that it would be easy to accomplish my defeat. I do not know whether their judgment was wrong or whether they overdid the operation, so that when they stopped speaking in my praise they found they could not change the opinion of the people which they had helped to create.

I have seen a great many attempts at political strategy in my day and elaborate plans made to encompass the destruction of this or that public man. I cannot now think of any that did not react with overwhelming force upon the perpetrators, sometimes destroying them and sometimes giving their proposed victim an opportunity to demonstrate his courage, strength and soundness, which increased his standing with the people and raised him to higher office.

There is only one form of political strategy in which I have any confidence, and that is to try to do the right thing and sometimes being able to succeed.

Many people at once began to speak about nominating me to lead my party in the next campaign. I did not take any position in relation to their efforts. Unless the nomination came to me in a natural way, rather than

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as the result of an artificial campaign, I did not feel it would be of any value.

The people ought to make their choice on a great question of that kind without the influence that could be exerted by a President in office.

After the favorable reception which was given to my Message, I stated at the Gridiron Dinner that I should be willing to be a candidate. The convention nominated me the next June by a vote which was practically unanimous.

With the exception of the occasion of my notification, I did not attend any partisan meetings or make any purely political speeches during the campaign. I spoke several times at the dedication of a monument, the observance of the anniversary of an historical event, at a meeting of some commercial body, or before some religious gathering. The campaign was magnificently managed by William M. Butler and as it progressed the final result became more and more apparent.

My own participation was delayed by the death of my son Calvin, which occurred on the seventh of July. He was a boy of much promise, proficient in his studies, with a scholarly mind, who had just turned sixteen.

He had a remarkable insight into things.

The day I became President he had just started to work in a tobacco field. When one of his fellow laborers said to him, "If my father was President I would not work in a tobacco field," Calvin replied, "If my father were your father, you would."

After he was gone someone sent us a letter he had

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written about the same time to a young man who had congratulated him on being the first boy in the land. To this he had replied that he had done nothing, and so did not merit the title, which should go to "some boy who had distinguished himself through his own actions."

We do not know what might have happened to him under other circumstances, but if I had not been President he would not have raised a blister on his toe, which resulted in blood poisoning, playing lawn tennis in the South Grounds.

In his suffering he was asking me to make him well. I could not.

When he went the power and the glory of the Presidency went with him.

The ways of Providence are often beyond our understanding. It seemed to me that the world had need of the work that it was probable he could do.

I do not know why such a price was exacted for occupying the White House.

Sustained by the great outpouring of sympathy from all over the nation, my wife and I bowed to the Supreme Will and with such courage as we had went on in the discharge of our duties.

In less than two years my father followed him.

At his advanced age he had overtaxed his strength receiving the thousands of visitors who went to my old home at Plymouth. It was all a great satisfaction to him and he would not have had it otherwise.

When I was there and visitors were kept from the house for a short period, he would be really distressed

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in the thought that they could not see all they wished and he would go out where they were himself and mingle among them.

I knew for some weeks that he was passing his last days. I sent to bring him to Washington, but he clung to his old house.

It was a sore trial not to be able to be with him, but I had to leave him where he most wished to be. When his doctors advised me that he could survive only a short time I started to visit him, but he sank to rest while I was on my way.

For my personal contact with him during his last months I had to resort to the poor substitute of the telephone. When I reached home he was gone.

It costs a great deal to be President.



He Had A Brother

By Sinclair Lewis



IT WAS the familiar morning guilt, the old-fashioned evangelical American sense of guilt, which oppressed Haddon even more than the anguish beating in his temples, the rancid taste in his mouth, the dryness of his hands. He could not escape; he had to admit that on the evening before he had again played the fool. But as long as possible he protected his aching mind from reviewing the especial sorts of idiocy he had committed, while he tried to protect his body—curious racked body that once had lived so peacefully and sweetly with him—from the tortures of every light-ray, every yammer of the street.

He smoothed his pillow; he beat it as though it were an enemy. In his temporary insanity of a hang-over he sat up and banged it with his fists. Then he collapsed against its cool smoothness and tried to find surcease from the agony of going on living.

He could not hide, even in the pillow's tolerance, from last evening's folly—along with a few recollections of

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other evenings the past week. Was it possible that he, this decent, well-meaning Charles Haddon lying here, had got into a brawl with that filthy little bounder, Jalmers, had offered to fight him, had wept and gone on demanding a fight, while the other guests laughed at him and sneered?

Slowly, but inescapably as fire creeping into the cotton wool that was his brain, he remembered standing in the butler's pantry of his host, offering to help mix another cocktail and having his help contemptuously refused; trying to fish an olive from a bottle, dropping the bottle and hearing it smash; hearing the hostess say, "Oh, it doesn't *matter!*" in a way which indicated that it did matter; and all the time weeping, "Jalmers insulted my bes' frien'. I'm going to smash 'is face."

And who was it that had snapped, "Oh, do shut up"?

He felt cold to remember how many people had made that suggestion last evening. It seemed thousands.

Right now, at serene and sober breakfast tables, they were probably talking about him and saying, "Drinking himself to death."

Thank heaven, Micky McShea had taken him away from——

Now where the deuce had all this been, this party where he had rowed with Jalmers? Oh, yes, at Mrs. Oscala's. He remembered—his body motionless, his head still motionless in the depths of the pillow but his brain whirling like a propeller—that Micky and he had gone up to Mrs. Oscala's for a drink after the theater.

Neither of them had been too sober. There had been

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such a convenient drug store next door to the theater, a drug store that dealt in sodas, magazines, gin, and cannibal sandwiches, and possibly even in drugs. (For it is not true that there are no New York drug stores which handle drugs. I know several.)

And they had panhandled a drink from a friend's flask between acts.

He groaned. He, the highly respectable Mr. Charles Haddon, attorney, of the eminent New York firm of Arnault, Vexler and Haddon, had at forty-two become as much a panhandler as any hobo on the road. He had almost begged that fellow for a drink. And he was rather sure, now, that Micky and he had intruded upon Mrs. Oscala's party—that he would never again be invited to her gold-scarlet-purple-onyx-black-glass apartment.

How dry his mouth was!

And after Mrs. Oscala's, just where had they gone?

He realized that he did not know. The last he remembered was lachrymosely shaking hands with little Jalmers, and being forgiven. Well! He was, for five seconds, almost proud. After all this, he had taken hold of himself and got himself home, had somehow performed the drunk's familiar miracle of mountain-climbing up into a taxi, giving the driver an address, paying him, getting himself through the lobby of his hotel and into the elevator, undressing himself and decently going to bed.

It was just then that Charles Haddon realized that—no hope!—he could not go back to sleep, however much his dizzy brain and shaky body wailed for it. He must face the new day's judicial realization of his idiocy.

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And he realized that he had not, after all, undressed himself quite so neatly as he had believed. His trembly hand crept out and discovered that he was clad not in pajamas but in his undergarments, his socks and his dress trousers—he knew they were dress trousers as his fingers crept down the double braid at the trousers-seam.

He sat bolt up. He was perplexed to see that he had not gone to bed in his bedroom but in the living room of his suite at the Hotel Shropshire—the hotel where he had made a pretense of making a home ever since his wife had divorced him with an amiable and excoriating Paris divorce. Hm! He must have been even drunker than he had thought, to have fallen asleep here. He must——

And then Mr. Charles Haddon, of Arnault, Vexler and Haddon, attorneys at law, discovered that he was in a strange room, in an absolutely strange flat, partly undressed, lying on a couch, with a silken coverlet thrown over him. He hadn't the filmiest notion where he was, how he had got there. Had he passed out at Mrs. Oscala's? Was he still there? No. Her drawing-room was all "modernistic," galloping triangles and hysterical brass, while this room was serene with white paneling and old Chippendale.

He threw his legs over the side of the couch, gripping his forehead to keep it from bursting with sudden agony, and wrapped the coverlet around his silly undershirted shoulders. There was no one to be seen, no sound anywhere from whatever unknown rooms might stretch beyond. Was it night or day?

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The damask curtains were drawn at the tall windows at the end of the long room, but a gap let in a pallid light like that of early morning. Haddon groped for his watch, in the evening waistcoat which lay in a messy heap with his dress shirt, his coat and collar and tie and one shoe, in a disdainful wing chair beside the couch. It was only seven. Thank the Lord! He could escape before his unknown host came in.

He would have given a great sum for a long cold glass of water, for the chance to wash his stinging eyes, but he dared not prowl. Why! The owner of the apartment might not even know he was here! In his drunken somnambulism he might have come here after the owner had gone to bed. Staggering, groaning a little, he huddled into his wrinkled dress shirt, with a red wine stain across it, and, puffing, sat down to draw on his shoes.

He did not know how to find his way out of the apartment. There were three doors to the room. He decided on the door at the other end from the windows, but he stood before it uneasily for half a minute. Suppose it should open on a bedroom and a startled host—a frightened host reaching for a revolver—a screaming woman?

He edged the door open with hands nervous as snakes. Cheers! It led to a corridor and what must be the outer door. Creeping past closed doors behind which he imagined scores of enemies, he bolted into the vestibule and, as the elevator came to his ringing, he felt safe.

But, glancing into the elevator mirror, he almost snarled at his image—Charles Haddon, the immaculate, in wrinkled dress coat, streaked shirt-front, at seven of a

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June morning. And the elevator-runner seemed doubtful; the hallman in the pretentious Moorish-Gothic-Chinese lobby below almost stopped him. With a feeling of being reprieved from execution, Haddon scrambled through the bronze-proud doors, and into a taxi.

Then he faced his thoughts.

He told himself—no Salvation Army brigadier could have done it better—exactly how many kinds of a blasted fool he had been. But he had done that before, a good many times. Now there was a new agitation in him. If he had, he warned himself, actually so passed out that he had gone, or had been taken, to a strange apartment in his stupor, what else might he not have done? Why! He might have awakened this morning in a police cell, charged with murder; might have killed with no memory of it.

He shuddered. Then: "I've been saying I ought to go on the water wagon. No 'going to go on it' now! I'm *on* it, right this minute! Scared not to be. No tapering off! Quit cold! Not another drink, not one, for——"

All the way to his hotel he argued it out: whether to be dry for a week, for a month, or forever. With a gloating feeling of having accomplished vast victories, he fixed on three months.

It was much easier to be firm in his mind about the three months than about this same morning. All through his edifying resolves he was aching, "I wish I had a drink right now!" It was hard to keep from feeling for his pocket flask to see if that useful object, empty before nine last evening, hadn't perhaps miraculously filled it-

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self. But in a glow, ignoring the way in which the servants in the Hotel Shropshire lobby tried to ignore the spectacle of a guest arriving in soiled evening clothes at seven-thirty in the morning, he went up to his apartment and crawled righteously under a cold shower.

It hurt.

Feeling better, he tramped to the ice box in his kitchenette and inaugurated his new life of temperance by having two stiff whisky-and-sodas, shuddering as they brought him back to life again, changed him from an abject Mr. Hyde to a complacent Dr. Jekyll. He managed to keep from hearing his own scornful remarks to himself, and he was able to drink a cup of coffee and eat half of a fried egg without feeling sick—not very sick.

He was even able, after reading the newspaper, including the want-ads and the summer-resort advertisements, to dress and go to the office and arrive there only an hour late.

By twelve, when he had had two more drinks—sneaking them down in the wash-room of the office—he was radiant enough to explain that he really wasn't a dirty dog and a traitor to himself and to his honor to take these drinks. He pointed out, as though he were judge, jury, and attorney for the defense all in one, that of course he had never for a second, in "going on the water wagon," meant to include today. Naturally, he couldn't! Not feeling the way he did after last night! But starting tomorrow—absolutely, and for three straight months!

And at twelve o'clock he convinced himself again that

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it was entirely due to Prohibition and to having been divorced by his wife that he, the Charles Haddon who ten years ago had never been drunk in his life, had taken to hiding himself from the boredom of living in the pink clouds of alcohol.

And at twelve he telephoned to Micky McShea, his companion of the disastrous evening before.

They were curious friends, Haddon and Micky, and very good ones. Neither they nor anyone else understood why. Haddon was reticent, smartly dressed, grave, given to learned books, rather a snob, not very popular, an excellent corporation lawyer, and a hater of any sport more vigorous than motoring.

Micky McShea, otherwise Mr. Vincent Carruthers Van Valkenberg McShea, Princeton 1906, polo star and tennis champion till he had grown too fat and short-winded, inheritor and president of the exalted Rio and Eastern Importing Company, was the darling of any not-too-highbrow gathering. He knew all the off-color stories that had ever been told. His laugh was like subway blasting, and the liquor that was a lust, a longing and a torment to Charles Haddon was apparently only an agreeable tickler to Micky McShea.

About the only things that they had in common were their clubs, their mild wealth and the fact that both had been divorced by their wives with Whisky named as co-respondent.

Haddon and Micky were not uncommonly agreeable to each other. At bridge, their remarks on overbidding would have caused a shooting, in the more correct days

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of Cripple Creek. Yet they were together almost every evening, and the only time when Micky became more violent than in his abuse of Haddon was when someone else dared to hint that he didn't like Haddon's vocabulary or his wrist watch. (Haddon wore a wrist watch. Micky didn't. But then, Micky had been only a major of artillery on the Western Front in the war, whereas Haddon had talked strongly about going into the intelligence department, if the war lasted till 1920 or so.)

When the psychologists have finally explained why men go to war, why men rave over one feminine nose and abhor another of precisely the same dimensions and pinkiness, why certain men are willing to endure the horrible limelight-soaked lack of privacy involved in being President of the United States, then they might turn to something really difficult, and explain why friends like each other.

Certainly there was nothing particularly amiable in the address of Mr. Charles Haddon to Mr. Micky McShea on the telephone:

"Say, where did you get to last night, anyway?"

And Micky sounded as though he were addressing a debtor:

"Yuh, and a fine guy you were! Oh, Lord, what a hang-over I had this morning!"

"Say, where did we go after—— Uh, doing anything for lunch?"

"Certainly not!" growled Micky. "Suppose anybody that's decent would be seen with me when they know I

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run around with you? Meet you at the Bond Club at one-fifteen. Try to stay sober till then!"

At one-twenty, when Haddon arrived at the club, he had a private snifter in the wash-room.

At one-twenty-five, when Micky arrived, he invited Haddon to have a drink, and Haddon, after being peculiarly snooty about "drinking so early in the day," accepted the invitation—twice. Then they looked happy and slightly vague.

They lunched beside the half-block of windows in their peculiarly American sort of club, more American than sugar corn or Will Rogers: the twenty-second story of a skyscraper looking down on North River, with tugs streaking across the harbor and freighters for Singapore and Saloniki trudging out to sea.

"Say, just where did we go after Mrs. Oscala's last night, Micky? To tell you the truth, I'm a little hazy."

Micky looked at him pityingly. For so plump and ruddy-faced and glossily bald a man, with his hectic striped scarf and his too-well-cut waistcoat, Micky sounded almost tender. "You poor kid, you did get it bad! Don't you remember at all?"

"Of course I do!" testily. "But there's some details——"

"Don't you remember that Grout, the admiralty lawyer, was at Mother Oscala's, and he and Mrs. Grout were going home same time we were, and you insisted on their taking us up to their place on Park Avenue and giving us another drink? They didn't cotton to the idea much, but they took us along, and you said that if Grout

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had his rights, he'd be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and then you said his gin was rotten—as it was!—and then you tried to make love to Mrs. Grout, and you said you were a little tired and wanted to lie down just for a second, and you passed out, blam!

“When we tried to get you up, you wanted to fight the whole bunch of us. You said Grout was a ‘dirty little ambulance-chasing shyster.’ We finally had to let you stay there on the couch, and me—oh, golly, I wasn’t any too sober, myself!—I came home.

“Now listen, kid. The Grouts were awful nice about it. They knew you were drunk and not responsible. But same time—— Mind you, I guess I’ve drunk as much hard liquor as most people in this town, and from *temps* to temps, as we say in Paris, I’ve tried to lick taxi drivers. But same time, old boy, you’ve got to stop——”

Haddon did not hear Micky’s temperance lecture. He was still with horror and self-hatred. Judge Grout, though not at all a teetotaler, was a dignified, restrained, rather irritable pundit who belonged to the Century Club and St. Thomas’ Church; he was precisely the kind whose murmurs could turn Charles Haddon from a respectable and responsible attorney into a gutter-rat—into such a gutter-rat as he had felt himself to be at seven that morning.

All that afternoon he did not have a drink—oh, except the one or two that his twitchy nerves demanded before he could talk to weighty clients.

At five-thirty he bravely decided not to go to the cocktail party given by Judge Rigadon (the one who gave

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those dreadfully stiff sentences to bootleggers). In fact, he went home and, lonely though he found that brocaded barrenness of a hotel apartment, he endured it for several minutes, and so did not arrive at Judge Rigadon's cocktail party till almost six-thirty.

There he met a lawyer friend, Dick Souter, who was giving a party at the Vraie Vivienne night club, and——

Next morning, at ten o'clock, Charles Haddon awoke to discover that he was lying in dinner clothes across his bed—his own, this time—and to recall, between gripes of nausea and pangs of headache, that the night before he had tried to fight a waiter at the night club, that Dick Souter had said to him, "For heaven's sake, will you shut up, Haddon?" and that in a state of hurt and noble dignity he had wavered through the miles and leagues, the forests and hills and wide-flung steppes of the night club, and gone home.

But this time Haddon made no good resolutions. Neither did he try to go to the office. "I'm licked. I've got to do something," he muttered.

He made, now, no pretense of being lightly able to "go on the water wagon." He was frightened. He had a bromide, a high ball, not as things he wanted but as horrible drugs for a sick man.

"Licked! Got to have someone to help me!"

It was June, and business at the firm was light. It was June, and in his boyhood town, Glen Western, there were meadows to quiet sick nerves. And in Glen Western was his brother, Ed Haddon.

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He had not seen Ed for three years.

Ed was not, like Charles Haddon, a "success." He was the village druggist, and he had married Mildred Brown—you know Mildred Brown, the daughter of the conductor on the Ragusa and Alfalalfa branch of the N. Y. C.? But Ed, Charles suddenly remembered, was the steadiest, honestest, soberest man living. Dirty shame he hadn't had Ed come down to New York for so long now!

With a not quite sane haste, his hand twitching, Haddon gave a long-distance call for Glen Western and for Mr. Ed Haddon. While awaiting it, he called his office, announced to the chief that he felt a little sick, that he was going away for a week, and that there was nothing on the cards that couldn't be handled by young Rufus Early.

With hot cheeks he imagined how the chief, old Arnault, would worry, and how that young beast Early would snicker about Haddon's "sickness." But——

Oh, hang 'em all! Better to be a little ridiculous than to be dead, as he would be, soon, if this kept up! And he was not coming back in a week. Perhaps never! Perhaps a year from now he would be a country attorney in Glen Western, a plodding, dusty fellow, but sane again and decent and kind.

Then on the telephone was Mildred, his sister-in-law, saying, "Why, that would be real nice if you could come. Oh, yes, sure, you bet, lots of room. Ed's off today, fishing at Purgis Lake. Yes, we'll be real glad to have you. I'll meet you with the car at the seven-sixteen."

He had the whole picture of the village street, the

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peace of maples, the friendliness of little stores and white houses with comfortable lawns, the smell of lake breezes, the companionship of home-town boys who called him not Mr. Haddon or Charles or Charlie, but Chuck.

He was disappointed that Ed and Mildred no longer lived in the Grampa Haddon house, with the old "natural wood" rockers on the broad porch and the pathy lawn with a twine hammock between two box elders. Their new house was a stuccoed bungalow, smelling of varnish and mail-order rugs, and instead of the slovenly, good-natured old porch, it had a perky little stoop with red-tiled flooring and four stiff wicker chairs.

As they drove up to the bungalow, Mildred said smugly, "You see, even poor *we* haven't done so *badly*, after *all*!"

Though he had been hysterically glad to see her dependable round face at the station, he disliked her then, and he disliked heartily the guest room with its mean air of a hospital.

But in the June evening, after a supper of fresh fried pike and tea biscuits and scalloped potatoes and floating island, which tickled him with its memory of boyhood, as they sat out on the stoop there was a smell of unlaundered grass, a rustle of water from neighborhood hoses, a soft whirl of motor tires on the dirt road and the immemorial village sound of dogs idly barking. It was utter peace. It was his boyhood. It was the revival of the boy, Charles Haddon, who had been so ambitious and studious

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and untempted . . . And he definitely did not want a drink!

Then he heard New York.

In town, he had been too habituated to it to hear it. Now, in its absence, his ears suddenly caught the whole bedlam that for years had assailed him—elevated, clacking feet, river horns, insane riveters, voices indignant or boisterous or whining, and the harsh *grrrrrrr* sound which motor tires made on hard pavements all day, all night, dawn and noon, noon and twilight. And he was safe from it! He was here!

They had been talking as becomes Home Folks.

"Say, what ever became of that Bill Tyler that used to be the implement dealer?" and, "Do you ever hear from Cousin Myron?" and, "I guess Old Man Warman must be pretty well fixed by now." These dronings had protected the kindred strangers one from another.

Now, as the village silence suddenly roared at Charles, he cried, "You don't know how nice it is to be here with you! New York has, uh—— Well, it's kind of got on my nerves. You know. Overwork, and hard to sleep nights with all the racket and—— But here I feel like a new human being, already."

With no defiance but with an infinite sisterly kindness, Mildred patted his arm. Ed, lounging against the stuccoed wall, stalked over to pat his shoulder.

Mildred murmured, "You poor darling! It must be terrible to fight the city all the time. Well, we want you to rest. We can't give you much in the amusement line, but we'll be awful glad if you find you can rest in our

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little home and—and you needn't get up till half past eight! If the girl is too busy, I'll fry you an egg for breakfast."

Then they talked almost as frankly as though they were not related.

Mostly it was Charles Haddon who talked. He had been longing for a father confessor. He had been ashamed to tell his troubles to that Micky McShea who went nightly through as arduous campaigns in the crusade for pleasure as himself, but came out of them with a Turkish-bath pinkiness and glow.

The ears of Ed and Mildred almost creaked with intentness as he bewailed the strain of city life: office politics, the demands of clients, the competition, the horrible expensiveness. He had very little to say about drinking and exactly nothing to say about finding himself in strange gutters at awakening, but it was clear enough, even to the innocence of Glen Western, that he had—oh, just now and then—found relief in a stray cocktail when the stress had been too great.

With the delight of the godly in the presence of sin, they snapped at this agreeable hint of scandal.

"Guess you people in the city do quite a lot of boozing, sometimes, don't you?" Ed urged.

He lost all caution and poured out, "Too cursed much altogether!" He might have been warned by their soft gurgles of delight at discovering the clay feet of their bronze brother, but recklessly he burned on:

"Of course I'm temperate. Take mighty good care not to drink too much. But same time—— Oh, you can

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scarcely realize the tempo of the city. It *gets* you! And there's evenings when you've worked so hard all day that you haven't one ounce of strength left, when you're shaky with tiredness, and yet you have a frightfully important date for the evening. You'd give your left leg to be able to go to bed. And then, of course, a few cocktails keep you going."

"A few?" Ed groaned happily. "Do folks ever take more than one cocktail? Golly! Wouldn't want to tamper with *my* health that way!"

Just then the first neighbor arrived, to inspect the returned prodigal and look for the signs of husks in his hair. Charles was relieved to have the talk rescued from peril and turned into such familiar security as, "Well, Chuck, guess it feels pretty good to be back in a real town again, hey?" and, "Say, remember the time when Hal Evans licked you and you went home crying?"

Actually, Charles Haddon had not recalled that amiable incident for twenty-five years. Now he blushed and felt irritated—felt inferior to the Glen Western against which he had rebelled as a passionate, nervous child. But these smarting recollections were safer than the confession to which, he felt, he had almost been betrayed.

They talked on, the Haddons and intermittent neighbors, till a very late hour, almost till the bawdy hour of eleven, a full hour later than Ed Haddon's decent normal bedtime; talked on the porch, with the serene lights of village homes among lilac bushes and the maples. In the morning Charles slept till nine. He had awakened only to the sounds of cockcrow, of a train whistle far off in

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the gap of the hills, and these pleasant murmurs had been but assurances of regained security, of the miracle of turning from a nerve-tortured wreck into an eager boy again.

He tramped, he fished, he slept under trees. If there was no particular spice in the conversation at Ed Had-don's table, there was no jabbing worry. Now, when Mildred, as she would put it, "took little digs at him," he was amused.

He won another fortnight's leave from the office. He dropped, as though New York were but a myth and a passing dream, into the old relations with such of his boyhood friends as had not gone off to Buffalo, Schenectady, to the corn lands of the West. And so it chanced that after a week when he had drunk nothing save rare, secret, shamed nips from the one quart of Scotch which he had brought from New York and which he had concealed behind the radiator in his room, he fell into Glen Western's version of a High Whoopee.

The same Hal Evans who had once sent him home bawling was now become Mr. H. Everett Evans, attorney, surveyor and agent for the Bristol and Buenos Aires Assurance Co., Inc. But Hal had remained the village terror. "People say he drinks!" the village whispered.

Hal was, in fact, in his one lone bald self, the Monte Carlo, the Montmartre, the Broadway, of Glen Western. He had to work hard, in a village so sinless and so interested in sin, but he had by some magnificence kept

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up his position of Satan in Paradise, and he was proud of it, and they were proud of him for it.

When Charles Haddon arrived, this village terror of an Evans was away. The populace credited him with being occupied with purple orgies in the Roman splendors of Buffalo, though actually he was trying to persuade the farmers of Cattaraugus County to take out lightning insurance.

But when H. Everett returned, he hustled to Charles and he whispered, "Saaaaaay, boy, it's good to have a live one in this burg again! Say, I'll bet the I-Knew-Him-When Club have been calling you 'Chuck'! Well, say, you certainly are 'Charlie' to me, and no mean cracks about it, either! And tonight we throw a party!"

They did, and after this wise was the party.

It was composed of Mr. H. Everett Evans, Mr. Charles Haddon of New York, Mr. Hap Macbeth, undertaker and dealer in Fine Furniture, Mr. Pete Gallup, dealer in Shoes, Hats and Gents' Furnishings, and Mr. Mort Wheeler, motor agent and part proprietor of Ye Olde Glen Western Inn. First, as was proper, they bought two prescriptions from Doc Engel for two dollars apiece. In the interests of conviviality the doc knocked off fifty cents on each prescription, and he hinted that if his Aunt Emmy from Gowanda weren't staying with them, he cer'nly would be glad to come along and show Old Chuck a Good Time.

Since to cash in these golden prescriptions at Ed Haddon's, here in town, would be to betray their honor guest,

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they drove in Mr. Wheeler's secondhand sedan to the town of Melanchthon, ten miles away.

It was true that Melanchthon couldn't, as H. Everett so well said, "touch a candle to Glen Western for pep and looks." Glen Western had cement pavement on three streets, whereas Melanchthon was paved only on Main Street. And Melanchthon hadn't even a Carnegie Library, while Glen Western—as H. Everett understood it, though he himself hadn't much time to waste with books—had one of the best libraries in that part of the country.

But one thing Melanchthon did have: a drug store whose proprietor was a "real guy." He did not split his prescription rye and, unlike that holier-than-thou Ed Haddon, he was pleased to have a drink with the boys after they had procured their remedy for 'flu.

With the two pints of rye from this haven, the party drove back to Glen Western and up to the side road by the I. O. O. F. Cemetery, which was the one safe refuge for merry fellows. There they passed the two pint bottles from lip to lip, and each of them, except Charles Haddon, told again all the dirty stories he knew. And it was during this orgy that Charles was completely won to virtue.

He drank what would, in New York, have been one-tenth of an evening's ration. He told no stories, and he was not greatly diverted by those he heard. When the mad merry-andrews dropped him at the residence of Ed Haddon, he sat by himself on the porch, rejoicing that he was free of his letch for drunkenness and quarreling,

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equally rejoicing that Ed and Mildred would never know of this, his one last evening of debauchery.

He went to bed at a quarter after eleven—Ed and Mildred had been snoring now for an hour. He awoke at seven, glad of his clear head and the end of his madness.

Now it is fabled by travelers that the inhabitants of India, Africa, and other heathen lands without bathtubs, luncheon clubs devoted to Service, theories of relativity and all the other blessings which we here daily enjoy, have mysterious ways of spreading news, probably by telepathy, so that five minutes after General the Honorable Sir John Spoggins, the esteemed explorer, has changed his shirt, in the jungle in N'Goynga, the incident is perfectly known in Prgzka, thirty-seven kilometers away. But it must be insisted, for the fair fame of these United States, that no jungle magic of telepathy can touch a Gopher Prairie or a Glen Western.

The party had been held in the distant reaches beside the Odd Fellows' Cemetery, from a quarter to ten to a quarter to eleven at night. And presumably there had been no great number of Pinkertons or newspaper reporters hiding there. Yet when Charles came down to breakfast at sixteen minutes after seven the next morning, Mildred looked at him with a curious, excited intentness which indicated to him that she knew all about it. She said nothing, and she said it noisily.

At eight, Charles started for the drug store, with the confiding intention of buying a pack of cigarets. Now, from the residence of Mr. Ed Haddon to his drug store

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was no great distance; it was, in fact, three blocks, and in Glen Western the blocks are short and quiet. But in that small journey, old Mr. White cackled, "Guess you boys had quite a time last night"; old Mrs. Ebberle whinnied, "Well, I'm surprised to see you up so early after what happened last night"; and the Reverend Mr. Jonas, with the grass stains on his knees, held Charles' hand in the most uncomfortable manner and lamented, "Mr. Haddon, of course, I'm practically a newcomer to Glen Western. Ain't been here but two years. So I ain't one of your older friends. But brother, do you feel that you're giving the Younger Generation the Example that a City Lawyer like you had oughta?"

At the drug store, Brother Ed, after carefully ringing up the fifteen cents for the cigarets, grunted, "Say, Charlie, I want to see you in the back room!"

Far more uncomfortable than he had ever been in arguing a case before the Supreme Court, Charles followed him into that strange den of carboys and straw-board boxes and litters of excelsior.

"Now you look here, Charlie. I ain't one to criticize anybody. 'Live and let live' is my motto. But same time, if you're going to stay with Mildred and me, you gotta act nice!"

In the hundredth of a hundredth of a second, Charles Haddon went through rather an elaborate mental picture. He saw himself telling Ed what he thought. He saw himself—but so politely!—thanking Mildred for her hospitality and catching the nine-seventeen for New York. He saw himself back in New York—and he knew

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that he could not go back yet, even with the protection of Micky McShea.

With no apparent hesitation he said, "Do you mean our party last night, Ed?"

"You know what I mean, all right!"

"I'm sorry, Ed. There won't be another."

If Charles Haddon had nightly indulged in Babylonian orgies, he could not have been more closely watched. He did have the sense to hasten home and get rid of his now empty bottle of Scotch. He hid it on a beam over the furnace in the cellar. He knew, in the next two days, that Ed and Mildred were searching his room.

His notes on the Sancho case had been disturbed; his shirts, placed with his usual fussiness in the top drawer of the bureau, had been turned over. At midday dinner and evening supper he was sure, from the bright insect-like way in which they were watching, that Ed and Mildred were hoping to find him drunk.

And so it came to pass that because they so righteously suggested drunkenness, he wanted to be drunken.

In the illusion of returning to his boyhood, he had for certain days escaped that strain of New York and of losing his wife which had expressed itself in alcoholic insanity. He had really believed that maple trees and lilac bushes could save him from the suicide which had inarticulately been behind his every thought. But now the leering, peering expectation of Ed and Mildred brought back to him hourly the alcohol which he had tried to forget.

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They were convinced that he was somehow getting those several daily cocktails of which he had indiscreetly told, and so, it must regretfully be stated, here in the propriety of Glen Western he went to the devil.

He had no great admiration for H. Everett Evans, but H. Everett was sympathetic, as only fellow sinners can be. H. Everett steered him to the county bootlegger, an immensely fat farmer who had a still behind his corn-crib. In the farmhouse kitchen, Charles sat between the pump and the rusty stove, every afternoon. It was a happy refuge.

The bootlegger, chuckling through each cell of his thick body, told of the time when his weighty wife had kept three officers at bay while he smashed every bottle in the house; he told merrily of his term in the penitentiary and how chummy he had become with the warden, and how he had made wine for the warden out of the grapes on the wall.

It was a peaceful place, and kindly. Yet every moment there, Charles Haddon felt guilty. And every moment that he was back in the righteous household of Ed and Mildred Haddon, he longed to return. Daily, either Mildred or Ed managed to remark, "Well, I guess you find it pretty slow here, but maybe if you'd try to lead a nice, decent life for a little while, it wouldn't be so bad for you, even if it ain't quite so gay as New York!"

Charles was conscious that every time he returned from the farmer-bootlegger's they were sniffing at his breath. And now a curious thing happened. He started for New York, for its peace and anonymity—he did not

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merely start; he fled—yet that flight took him a week.

All that had been the highly reputable and responsible Mr. Charles Haddon of New York dripped from him. He was again little Charlie Haddon, young Chuck; he was again afraid of the power and magic of his big brother Ed.

It was simple, in the end. He used one of the oldest and stalest devices in the world. He borrowed H. Everett's car, drove to Melanchthon, telephoned to his office in New York and had them telegraph to him that the office simply could not carry on without him.

He hoped, in a little-boy way, that Ed and Mildred would be impressed by the telegram with its suggestion that the entire court-system of New York State was held up for his return.

They were not.

He said good-by to them at the station with all the proper drama. He waved and shouted. He pretended to listen while they said, "Now be sure and write!" And when the dusty and acrid day-coach had rattled away, Charles Haddon fell suddenly into an abyss of terror. This for him was death. He had gone to the only refuge he knew, and it had failed him. Was he now returning to nights of idiocy and mornings of horror?

The train arrived in New York at four of the afternoon, and Charles went directly to the office of Micky McShea. He was a most respectable-looking person as he came into the brown-leather decorum of the Rio and Eastern Importing Company; a rather slight, fragile

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man, with a curiously high forehead; a man most correct as to boots and tie.

He waited quietly till Mr. McShea should have finished his conversation with Don Antonio Lopez of Brazil; most quietly he sat down in an enormous leather chair. And, still quietly, he said, "Micky, I guess I'm through. I got to drinking just about as bad, up in Glen Western. Shall I croak myself? No! I mean it! I can't go on."

And whatever quietness he displayed, it was noisy beside the stillness with which Micky McShea answered:

"Charles, I'm sorry to hear you say that. If you want to pop off, by all means do so. I could scarcely blame you, naturally! Because I've been planning to do so myself!"

"What?"

"Just that. My doc has given me six months to live if I—Oh, you know! And I don't want to wait in the death-house! He says I could live for maybe another twenty years if I quit drinking, but I don't see——" Micky's voice rose in hysteria. "I can't, Charles! I'm gone! I might as well quit right now. I'm finished. I might as well get it over. Nobody cares a hang. I'm——"

Charles Haddon rose, and there was nothing now of neatness in him. His fists closed while Micky raved:

"Oh, whatzit matter? Let's go out with a bang! Come on, Haddon, let's have lil drink!"

From the upper left drawer of his desk, Micky produced a bottle of Scotch and flourished it wildly.

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Haddon snatched the bottle and coldly poured the contents down the washbowl.

"Now that's a nice thing to do!" protested Micky feebly. "But what the deuce! I got 'nother bottle! Don't you want drink, 'self?"

The truth was that Charles Haddon very much wanted a drink. He had thought about it all the way from the station.

But he said, and he almost believed it, "I do not want a drink! I've cut it out. I told you I was drinking up home but I decided to quit. Now come on. We're going to get out of this."

He persuaded the protesting, almost maniacal Micky to come with him for a taxi ride to the coolness of Long Beach. He became more and more testy as Micky suggested road houses at which they might stop. He took Micky back to Micky's Louis Quinze au Moins apartment, fed him crackers and milk, and put him to bed.

When Micky was asleep, it came to Charles that he still wanted a drink. He knew all about Micky's adequate booze cupboard. But he couldn't play a dirty trick like that! He was going to save Micky, if it cost him his own life.

For a fortnight, the first fortnight in five years, Charles Haddon drank no alcohol whatever, though he felt that he needed it in the stress of caring for Micky McShea. Micky took every advantage of being an invalid. He became insanely cunning, he sneaked, he tried to get a drink when Charles was napping, so Charles

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finally had to pour out every drop of that admirable cellar.

And, to be able to manhandle Micky should he really become wild, he took exercise daily, he breathed deeply, he forgot his worries about his law practice and about his divorced wife, and devoted himself to the care of Micky.

Charles was, fortunately, not quite alone in his care for Micky. The moment he had taken Micky home from the office, he had called for the doctor. Micky's doctor, Bill Cady, M.D., was a sophisticated person who understood that a man could take a drink or let it alone, and in all probability would take it. He was a smiling, tired, jolly, exhausted man—the country doctor in New York, the man on whom all the specialists and costly surgeons battered. He had a small mustache and a steady hand.

He sat with Charles hour on hour after they had coaxed Micky into bed. Apparently he never slept, and when Micky awoke clamoring at five in the morning, Charles was able to get Doctor Cady to come around in half an hour.

With the help of the doctor, Charles had Micky in such beaming health in two weeks that he was able to forget his responsibility and to begin to think again for himself.

They sat, those two men, Charles and Doctor Cady, in Micky's apartment on an evening of early July.

"Well, I think we've got the old boy into pretty good shape now," said Charles. "In a few days I'll drive him up to New England or some place and complete the cure.

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And I certainly need it myself! I've been giving him my nights and days now for two weeks."

"Yeah," said the doctor.

"So have you, of course. But then, I guess that's just part of your job."

"Yeah, I guess it is," said the doctor.

"But me, of course, I'm not used to it. Well, we pulled it off! And now I'd rather like a drink myself! You see, I had to quit, in order not to show Micky a bad example. I even got rid of all his booze here. But now—— I say! I could have my bootlegger here in ten minutes. Don't you think you'd like a drink? I looked in a moment ago, and Micky is sound asleep, so he won't know about it."

Doctor Cady rose from the wing chair. He was young, and his mustache was rather unimportant, but he had the manner of one who deals with the sanctities of life and death. And said Doctor Cady, "Oh, the devil!"

"Eh?" said Charles Haddon.

"You blithering fool!" said Doctor Cady. "Haddon, I don't think I can stand it any longer," he continued. "Micky has a lot of endurance as an actor, but I haven't. Man, haven't you ever guessed—do you mean to say you've never guessed—that Micky hasn't needed me for one second, all this fortnight? That he's played at being shot to pieces so you would quit drinking yourself? That we're all of us sick and tired of trying to care for you? That the next time you call me at five in the morning, I'll kill you? Tumble to yourself, man, and quit being a blithering baby!"

Charles Haddon did four things. He managed to

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swallow such humiliation as he had never known. He shook hands with Micky and said only "Thanks." He went home to face his own soul, nor did he blink the smallness thereof. And he desired to take, and did not take, a drink.

He had found a brother, and for a brother one would do anything.



Old Man Tooker's Investment

By Peter B. Kyne



VEN before Henry Henderson, who owned the Horse Heaven outfit, began to creep up close to the inevitable day when he would abandon his cow pony for a buckboard and a team of light mules, men commenced to refer to him as Old Man Henderson. He was deeply religious and possessed an exalted sense of justice and a priceless black cook and body servant named Eben. Eben was sacred to Old Man Henderson, who was a bachelor and had reached the point in years and worldly gear when he dwelt in a nice little adobe ranch house and never ate with his punchers except on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

One day when he was in town for his mail and headquarters was deserted, save for the ranch cook and a cowboy who was recovering from a broken leg, a stranger rode up to the adobe ranch house and loudly and profanely demanded that Eben come forth and attend him. When Eben opened the door and discovered he had been summoned by a total stranger, who was drunk into the bargain, he said:

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"White boy, stop dat ruckus. Eff'n Old Man Henderson comin' home ketch you actin' uppity he sure mek you-all mighty hard to kotch. Whut you-all want?"

The noisy one, who was also ugly drunk, said he wanted dinner and mighty quick at that.

Now, no man on that ranch had ever talked that way to Eben, for Old Man Henderson would not have permitted it and Eben knew this; he knew, too, that he was sacred to Old Man Henderson and that it was beneath his dignity to cook for this frothing bully from nowhere. However, he was respectful.

He told the stranger he would not cook dinner for him; he suggested that the visitor ride to the cook-shack and present his case to the cook, who would make him welcome. To this the drunken visitor demurred, saying he had heard that Eben was a famous cook and had long yearned to sample his cuisine, and that a dinner by Eben he would have and that *muy pronto*.

Obsequiousness vanishes when a colored man's dignity and loyalty are attacked. Eben declared firmly that he would cook for no low white trash and reached for a rifle, for something told him he should equalize the situation. He did not succeed. The visitor pulled, put three bullets through Eben's body and rode off at a gallop.

From the bunk-house porch where he sat, with his leg in splints, braiding a *jáquima*, the broken-legged cowboy was witness to the brutal act. He could do nothing more, however, than make a swift and accurate inventory of the man's approximate size and weight, his wearing apparel, his outfit and his horse. So he remained

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where he was and shouted for the cook, who came and found Eben dead in the doorway.

The cook was fat and past middle age; he knew nothing of firearms and was not a horseman. So he and the crippled cowboy waited until Old Man Henderson drove in from town five hours later.

After the crippled cowboy had furnished him with such details as might be profitable, Old Man Henderson, who was religious, knelt and prayed for the soul of faithful black Eben. Next he prayed for strength to overtake Eben's murderer, left instructions with the ranch cook to have the boys bury Eben when they came in, went to the barn and saddled his Butterball horse.

Then he caught up a big roan half-thoroughbred, tied to his cantle a gunny sack containing six feeds of oats, and a few slabs of jerked beef, filled a canteen, buckled on his forty-five, slid a repeating rifle down the boot on his saddle and fastened the halter shank of the roan horse to his pommel. Thus, with a lead horse, he rode out at a gallop on the trail of Eben's murderer. When the Butterball horse gave out, he would mount the roan and continue the pace.

Evidently the killer was superbly mounted and, the alcoholic fog lifting from his brain, he must have realized that pursuit was inevitable; that it was up to him to ride far and fast and lose his trail if he could. As well attempt to lose a foxhound as Old Man Henderson. On the third morning, at dawn, the avenger rolled the killer out of his saddle blanket, tied him up and charged him with his crime.

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The man denied it, of course, but Old Man Henderson knew better. The description tallied perfectly and not for a hundred yards had Henderson been off the trail. He had even picked up the three empty cartridge cases the quarry had discarded when reloading his gun.

"Well," the prisoner observed bitterly, "'tain't no use trying to convince a man whose mind's made up."

"No, 'tain't," Henderson assured him. "I'm goin' to give you an hour to make your peace with God; if you got any last message to send to somebody, you write it an' I'll mail it—provided you don't get noways personal in your correspondence an' involve me in litigation with the grand jury."

Thereupon he knelt in the grass and prayed for enlightenment, for strength to do his duty and promote justice, for forgiveness for the erring soul he was about to send into eternity.

The prisoner was not a praying man and, apparently, he was not a writing man either. So he sat and stared owlshly at Henry Henderson, who, at the end of an hour, dropped the loop of his *reata* over his man's neck and drew it taut. Then he passed the other end over a sycamore limb, fastened it to the pommel of his saddle, mounted the big roan and rode out slowly.

Naturally the prisoner ran in rapidly to the foot of the sycamore, and screamed for mercy and help.

He was a foot off the ground when he dropped with great suddenness and collapsed in a heap. A moment later a man dismounted beside him, loosened his hempen collar and slipped it off.

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Old Man Henderson rode in and eyed the stranger. "That's good, accurate shootin', neighbor," he said. "I take it you're not a friend o' the near-deceased, or you'd have put that bullet through the back o' my skull instead o' through my rope. You frazzled it jest enough to let his weight bust it."

"And that," the recent arrival declared, "is an accurate analysis of the situation. This man you were about to hang is no friend of mine, Mr. Henderson."

"I don't know *you*," Old Man Henderson complained.

"Being an honest man and more than usually respectful of other people's rights, you wouldn't be apt to. My name is Len Tooker and I'm a Texas ranger. The governor of Texas sent me down here to get this young man and bring him back to Austin, dead or alive. And I most certainly aim to bring him back alive.

"You can see for yourself what a nuisance he'd be dead, because he's half dead now. If his neck ain't permanently twisted that'll be because it's got a certain percentage of rubber in it."

Old Man Henderson came down off his horse, for he respected the law, and Len Tooker had taken the precaution to show him his shield.

"Let's argy this matter fair an' reasonable," he suggested, "before proceedin' to serious disagreement regardin' the *corpus delicti*. I'm a law-abidin' man, as you seem to know, an' even if I wasn't I got a natural objection to serious argyment with a Texas ranger—particularly one that shoots from the hip as good as you do." And he added: "Although I'm not such a slouch with a

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six-gun myself. What you want this hombre for?"

"Murder!"

"Ah," Old Man Henderson breathed softly. "That's what I want him for, too," and he related to Len Tooker the tale of the slaying of his colored boy, Eben.

"This is quite a coincidence," the ranger admitted. "You say you've trailed him from your ranch?"

"Every foot o' the way an' never lost the trail oncet. He tallies with the description, he looks like he'd do it, an' his horse was a cream an' white pinto, which is a mighty rare color combination. There's his horse. He looks like a cream an' white pinto to me.

"The man won't give no account of himself, I've give him a fair trial, me bein' judge an' jury, an' I'm about to carry out the sentence o' the court when you interfere. Understand, I'm admittin' your right to interfere."

"Thanks, Mr. Henderson. Unfortunately, I am not admitting your right to deal out justice."

"What's the sense fussin' with him, ranger? He's murdered in cold blood the best cook an' body servant any man ever had, an' it's my Christian duty to see he don't do it again, which he's likely to do in liquor."

"How far is your ranch from here, Mr. Henderson?"

"Three hard days' ridin' over a mighty hard road."

"Suppose," said Len Tooker, "we examine his pony's shoes," and without further ado he caught up the cream and white pinto and led him down to the tree. Here the ranger squatted on his heels and rolled a cigaret. When he looked up he saw that Old Man Henderson was red and embarrassed.

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"I reckon there's somethin' wrong, ranger," the old man admitted. "I been followin' a horse shod with toe clips on his front feet, an' this here anamile's shod with plates. No cowboy ever shod this horse."

"No," Len Tooker agreed, "this isn't the horse you've been following, so the chances are this isn't the man you're lookin' for."

"Is he the hombre you're lookin' for?"

"I imagine he is. I've trailed him from Los Alamos, which is east of here, and you've trailed him from a point west of here. I claim he's my man by reason of a process of elimination. Just around the shoulder of this hill I stumbled across another man, in a dry camp.

"I'd just started to frisk him when I heard your man let out a most fearsome yell, so I forked my horse and came a-running. From the top of the little rise yonder I saw you giving him the lift, so I shot him out from under your hangman's noose, it being my official business to institute inquiries when I happen upon such high-handed procedure."

"You innercent fool!" Old Man Henderson yelled. "Handcuffed as that other feller is, I bet he's forked his horse an' is beatin' it out o' the country right now. Come on an' let's secure him."

"I scarcely think he has done that, Mr. Henderson. And I didn't handcuff him. He drew on me when I woke him up. While I'd never seen him before, I figured him for my man—particularly after his wanton exhibition of bad manners in pulling his gun on me before I could even say good morning to him.

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"You'll agree, Mr. Henderson, that I was justified in jumping to the conclusion that he was running from the law, otherwise he would not have gone on the peck. I would have preferred he hadn't, but when he did I saw I had to quiet him—and I did."

"I didn't hear no shot, ranger," said Old Man Henderson.

"I didn't shoot," Len Tooker replied patiently. "I rapped my gun over his head. I didn't intend hitting him so hard, either, but for some reason or other I did—and he went cool on me. Well, after discovering I'd been too enthusiastic, it occurred to me to hunt his horse. I figured he had a horse, because he'd been asleep with his saddle for a pillow; it seemed reasonable to suppose he'd hobbled his horse to graze.

"Well, I found the horse, which was the sort of horse I was looking for. I knew the horse well, on account of seeing him often over in Los Alamos, where he was formerly owned by an eastern lady who's visiting over there. When I saw this horse hobbled and grazing, it seemed to me his cream-colored patches were a deeper shade of yellow than the horse I expected to find.

"However, I knew the lady in Los Alamos had had her horse shod with flat plates, she using him on dirt roads only. So I examined the horse's feet and saw that he was not shod with plates. This seeming to indicate that I had made a fatal mistake, I was more or less troubled in my mind until I heard this victim of yours let out a yell that brought me on the run to investigate."

"This is sure a mix-up," Old Man Henderson opined.

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"Two fugitives mounted on cream an' white pintos—which they're the only two in Texas, I vow—trailed by two men seekin' jestic, camp within two hundred yards of each other."

"Well, it seems the wrong pursuers each got the wrong man. However, I imagine your Eben is avenged, so I'll trade you your live man for my dead one and throw my dead man's horse and outfit in for boot. I do not know who he is—or, rather, was—so we'll assume he hasn't any heirs and that his horse and outfit are yours for exemplary damages."

"I'll take the horse an' outfit, ranger, but you keep the late lamented."

"Then suppose you help me dispose of him," Len Tooker suggested. "I have no grave-digging implements, but we can tuck him into a cleft in the rim rock and wall him up with loose boulders. And I suppose we can cut a lot of red tape by not saying anything about it."

Old Man Henderson said he thought that was the practical thing to do, so they did it, and the boss of Horse Heaven knelt and prayed for the killer's soul. Then he and the ranger and the prisoner had some breakfast which Len Tooker prepared and they rested there until the following morning, when Old Man Henderson mounted his big roan and started back for his ranch. On the way home he picked up his Butterball horse and when he turned a cream and white pinto into the corral no one was so dull as to ask obvious questions.

When Old Man Henderson disappeared, Len Tooker's prisoner's face brightened. "I'm certainly glad to

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see the last of that old rooster," he declared. "For a religious man he sure beats my time." He eyed the ranger humorously. "What made you tell him you wanted me for murder? You know blamed well I'm not a murderer."

"Just to sort of cinch my claim to you and pass the time of day in light fiction. It sounded better to the old man to hear you were a killer instead of a plain fool. He'll feel more noble for having stretched the neck of a man that deserved it, even though he did it by mistake, than he'd feel if he knew he'd stretched the neck of a chap that didn't deserve it."

The boyish prisoner fingered his neck and wriggled it slowly.

"That's a beautiful pony you have, my friend," said the ranger.

"Isn't he, though? The minute I saw him I had to have him, and when the lady told me she was going back East and wanted to sell him I couldn't get my money out quick enough."

"He's too prominent a horse for a man in your line of business."

"What you mean?"

"You have, in a scabbard on your saddle, an excellent running iron, and in a leather case, tied back of your cantle, you have a small gasoline torch and a canteen of gasoline. You're a brand-blotter and you've been getting away with it because you've been too smart to light a fire to heat your iron and have the smoke betray you. So you hit on this scheme of a gasoline torch.

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"If you'd confined yourself to mavericks the Horse Heaven outfit wouldn't have complained about you, but when you took to brand-blotting the stupidest cow waddy in Texas knew you were at work and that you were a greenhorn and a fool. Old Man Henderson killed one of your blotched yearlings and skinned him; his old brand showed blue under the hide and your recent additions showed red. Who are you working for?"

"Myself," the prisoner admitted. "I thought I'd set up my own brand. I understand that's how practically all of the big cattlemen got their start."

Len Tooker rolled a cigaret and mused. "Well, from all I can learn, son, there's considerable truth in what you say. But a fellow *can* reform, you know.

"However, getting back to brand-blotching. The men that did it in the old days were pretty resolute hombres; they shot from the hip without much provocation, which is why some of them survived to become rich cattlemen and turn respectable.

"On the other hand, quite a number perished suddenly. Very few went to jail. It was so much easier to lynch them. Are you fixing to get yourself shot or lynched, young man?"

"No, not any more, ranger. I know just how it feels to be lynched. I'm the only man I ever heard of who has had the experience and lived to talk about it."

"You should be mighty grateful to me for saving you."

"I am. I'll never get over being grateful to you. I don't see how I'm ever going to catch even with you."

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"I'll tell you how. What's your name?"

"Jim Eastman."

"Well, John Henry Hobart Denton, I'll tell you how to pay your debt. You give me a bill of sale for your brand to the Horse Heaven outfit, so they can gather them up in the next round-up and claim them. The JHHD Bar brand was worked over from the HH, so they have a moral claim which you can make a legal one.

"I have the bill of sale with me and if you will take my fountain pen and sign it, I will sign as a witness. Then, if you will give me your word of honor never to indulge again in this line of endeavor and will lead an honest life, this case will be dropped right here."

The prisoner stretched his painful neck and grinned. "Aren't you a good deal like Old Man Henderson?" he queried. "Like him, you presume to take the law into your own hands."

"Well, if you object, I'll see to it that you are fed and boarded at the expense of the Lone Star State for the next five years."

"You can't prove I ever blotched a brand."

"Oh, yes, I can. I've been on your trail for a week and I've watched you do your stuff."

"Who told you my name was John Henry Hobart Denton?"

"Your respectable father. He even sent the governor of Texas your photograph and asked the governor to do what he could to locate you. He said you'd been reading western novels and had got all het up with the notion of

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going down into the great unfettered Southwest and becoming a rough, tough, flea-bitten cowboy.

"Because you sent him a picture post card from Austin, he knew you were in Texas and liable to get into serious trouble making believe you were a bad man; so the governor circularized the ranger force and sent us each a copy of your photograph. It never occurred to me you were in my territory until the foreman of the Horse Heaven outfit told me about some idiot blotching their brand and asked me to keep my eyes open for suspicious strangers.

"When he showed me one of the fresh hides I saw that your brand was four initials—and while I've seen a few brands in my day I never yet knew a real cattleman to have four initials and even if he did, he kept it a secret and only used two of them. Generally he prefers a number. Suddenly it dawned on me that J. H. H. D. stood for John Henry Hobart Denton.

"The next thing I heard was that some drug-store cowboy had fallen in love with Miss Daisy Pringle's cream and white pinto horse and bought him, paying three prices. I showed Miss Pringle your photograph and she said you were it, so I got on your trail with my partner. We were right interested in you because your mother's been grieving about you, son, and for the additional reason that your old man offered a reward of a thousand dollars for you.

"I could understand the old man's anxiety, he being a banker and your mother and sisters prominent in society. The idea of you aspiring to develop into a big

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cattlemen when you're a black sheep! Why, dog-gone you, you're not worth putting in the *calabozo*. They'd make you a trusty the week after you got in. You're harmless."

John Henry Hobart Denton blushed painfully. Suddenly he commenced to weep, and Len Tooker smoked quietly.

"Well," he demanded gently, after John Henry had cried himself out, "do you or do you not accept my program?"

"I accept," John Henry replied brokenly.

"There's hope for you. You're beginning to exhibit intelligence." Mr. Tooker chuckled. "I wired your old man to come down and get you. I told him you and I would meet him in Los Alamos on the fifteenth. Saddle up, John Henry Hobart Denton, and we'll drift. We have just time to keep our appointment."

In Los Alamos Len Tooker turned his prisoner over to a middle-aged gentleman, who immediately took out his wallet and commenced counting one-hundred-dollar bills. But Len Tooker waved them aside.

"You keep your money, Mr. Denton," he suggested. "The State of Texas pays me my wages. Besides, I have a lot of sympathy for your son John.

"When I was somewhat younger than John I got all steamed up on dime novels and ran away down into Indian Territory to kill a lot of peaceful Indians that had never done me a moment's harm. And I've achieved, in a measure, my early ambition.

"As a Texas ranger I've had to kill a few Indians,

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although not pure-breds. They had a slight admixture of Spanish or American in them—just enough to make them ugly.”

He shook hands with his prisoner. “Good-by, John Henry. You be a good boy and grow up and mind your daddy and never forget that honesty is the best policy. Those who forget that most generally get hung.”

“Can’t I do anything for you to show my gratitude, ranger?” the elder Denton pleaded.

“Not a dog-gone thing, sir.” He gazed solemnly at the banker. “I suppose you could lose a couple of hundred thousand dollars without crying over it?”

Denton said he could afford to lose a couple of millions to purchase peace of mind.

“Well, then,” said Len Tooker, “as a favor to me you might buy this boy a cattle ranch in some likely locality, stock it up for him and let him go to it, win, lose or draw. He likes cattle, I think, so why not indulge him? And he doesn’t like the life he’s doomed to, so why sentence him to it? Give him something he likes to do and the chances are he’ll not get into mischief.”

“Thank you, ranger. A good idea. I’ll consider it. By the way, there’s that horse. You may have him.”

“Oh, no. John Henry’s in love with that horse, so you take him with you. Why, that’s John Henry’s top cow horse.”

“I’ll never forget you as long as I live,” John Henry murmured tremulously. “It took me a year to learn to rope and hog-tie a yearling, preparatory to getting into the cattle business.”

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"I judged it took you longer than that, son. And you can stand more experience, I notice. That's one thing that interested me in you, John Henry. I said to myself, 'A boy that gets a notion he wants to learn a trade and then works at it hard a whole year to make himself fit for his work has got a lot of stick-to-it-ive-ness in his make-up, which, if directed along the right lines, will enable him to go far.'"

"What's the matter with your neck?" John Henry's father demanded. "You hold it on one side like a cockerel inspecting a worm."

"He fell off his horse and buckled his head under him. Like to broke his fool neck," Len Tooker lied smoothly. "I imagine it'll straighten out in time."

The years passed. Old Man Henderson continued to acquire more lands and cattle and often recalled the day he half lynched the wrong man. He never did get over being heartily ashamed of himself and was always busy reconstructing his primitive ideas of equity and justice.

He died without heirs at law and (for reasons best known to himself) he willed all his assets to Len Tooker, the man who had saved his peace of mind. So Len Tooker resigned from the Texas rangers and took over Old Man Henderson's range and long-horned cattle.

He developed into a good cowman, too, and made money when other cattlemen showed a loss.

Moreover, Len Tooker had the only white-faced cattle in that country; hence rustlers passed his cattle by

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until, eventually, the old-timers took to copying him and white-faces became common—whereupon Len Tooker presently discovered that the tally of his calf branding was oddly inconsistent with the tally of his round-up of those calves two years later.

Even after allowing liberally for cattle overlooked in the round-up and for natural deaths, he was still short. Nor were the carcasses discovered on his range at all proportionate to his liberal estimate of natural wastage.

Seemingly the local authorities were unable or unwilling to do anything in the matter, so Len Tooker decided to investigate on his own account. He announced himself as a candidate for sheriff and his sole platform was a promise to rid the county of cattle thieves. Immediately the cattlemen rallied to his support and with the help of other law-abiding citizens they elected Len Tooker.

The day he took the oath of office he turned over the management of his ranch to his foreman and devoted himself exclusively to the duties of his office. Whatever his methods were, they were salutary. He captured one gang in its entirety, after a bloody battle, and succeeded in having them sent to the penitentiary; if there were any rustlers left, they ceased thereafter to operate.

Having accomplished what he had set out to do, Tooker resigned his office.

However, retirement to his ranch could not dim the luster of Tooker's achievement. He had become a political power in his county and, as the choice of the better element and against his will, was sent to the state legis-

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lature, where he introduced several wise and necessary bills, fought them into the statute books and completed his term as state senator more popular personally and stronger politically than he had ever been.

The years passed and presently the alkali dust no longer showed prominently when it settled on Len Tooker's silvery head. He was still a prominent citizen, always a political factor to be reckoned with.

When, eventually, he ceased to ride a horse and purchased an automobile, he had conferred upon him the inevitable title. Men alluded to him as Old Man Tooker!

During the war Old Man Tooker made a lot of money, but, like thousands of his kind, he believed that the war-time prices of beef would continue for several years. So he speculated. In his early sixties he aspired to be a cattle king.

Suddenly the bottom dropped out of everything, cattle included. Cows that had cost Old Man Tooker seventy-five and eighty dollars dropped, almost overnight, to thirty, nor could he move them even at that figure. He held them over two years—two very dry years—and lost thousands of them.

He borrowed money on his old home ranch and set himself doggedly to the task of fighting it through. But politics was his undoing. He got behind the wrong man for governor, and one day the president of his bank called him in and told him so.

He did more than that. Knowing Old Man Tooker's power to sway votes, and realizing that his activities must be curtailed, he told the old warrior bluntly that the

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latter's political choice was not agreeable to the bank; he reminded Old Man Tooker that the bank held quite a lot of his paper, overdue and falling due, and while the bank would deprecate having to close in on him, nevertheless, since the man Tooker was supporting for governor was inimical to the banking interests of the state, naturally—well.

Meanwhile, Old Man Tooker stared at him, steadily, unwaveringly, bleakly. Finally he said: "Let me get this straight. Are you giving me my orders?"

The banker nodded. "I hate to, but—I have mine. This bank is not alone in the move to defeat your friend for governor. It is known that we have the means to control you and it has been suggested that we exercise our power. If we failed to do so, things might happen to us. The last four years of bad business have left us in a condition not quite so healthy as formerly. We could be crowded, you know."

"Maybe," Old Man Tooker agreed; "but I can't. I'm not that sort of invertebrate. I hear your orders and I refuse to obey them."

"This bank," the other replied quietly, "has bought up the mortgage on your ranch and a second cattle loan you floated in Kansas City. There's only one way you can protect yourself and that is by trotting in here with a certified check for half a million dollars. Everything you owe will be due and payable prior to the election and the day after the election legal steps will be taken to collect."

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"That will wipe me out," Old Man Tooker complained mildly.

"That's how I see the picture, Mr. Tooker."

"A little hard on a man my age, but no matter. I've been wiped out before, but I always had one asset left and nobody was ever able to levy on that. I'm a man. I'm free, white and sixty-one years old. You go to the devil!"

And he stalked out of the bank, went to a political rally and told the audience exactly what it was going to cost him to support the Democratic candidate for governor. For he was ever a fighter, and since he had to perish he swore he would carry a piece of the enemy's ear into dissolution with him. He would alienate his friends and followers from that bank; he would give the bank a black eye that would cost them dearly. And it did.

The bank denied Tooker's accusation, of course, but that was of no avail. For twenty years men had been wont to say in that county, when lauding another man: "Why, he's as honest and truthful and brave as Old Man Tooker."

Well, Old Man Tooker won, but he paid the price of his courage—his stupidity and lack of common sense, most people called it. The day after election a runty man drove to his ranch and served him with copies of the summons and complaint in two suits of foreclosure, one on his cattle and the other on his ranch.

He had ten days in which to reply to these suits, which he did. The cases were immediately set for trial and ten days later Old Man Tooker came into court and con-

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fessed judgment. He had not, in the interim, been able to refund his loans by borrowing from other sources.

However, the judge was a friend of his. He couldn't do much but he did what he could. It was possible Tooker might yet raise the money to pay the chattel mortgage, so with the consent of the plaintiff, who hesitated to refuse when His Honor suggested it, a stay of thirty days before execution of the judgment on the cattle was agreed to. The ranch, of course, could be redeemed by payment of the mortgage and accrued interest within a year after foreclosure.

Old Man Tooker's voice was unusually soft, with a note of pathos in it, as he thanked the judge and the plaintiff's counsel; when he strode out of the courtroom there was noticeable, for the first time, a stoop in his shoulders.

He was finished—cleaned—mopped up! Just an old cowman, unable to enter the lists again in life's competition, a wreck fit only for the poorhouse. He had lost all but his manhood, his reputation for courage and loyalty to a friend, his independence.

His independence? Ah, no, he had lost that now. Nothing but his courage left now, of use only to himself.

Crossing the courthouse square he fell, and his old friend, the sheriff, picked him up.

Old Man Tooker looked at him dazedly. "Nothing wrong, Bill," he murmured. "Just a little weak. Got a dizzy spell. I—I—I've just been through a hard half-hour, but I—I'll be all right. You might take me over to

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the hotel, Bill. I think I'd better go to bed for a couple of days and think this thing over quietly."

The sheriff took him to the hotel, put him to bed and called a doctor, who presently gave the sheriff his verdict.

"He'll not live. There is nothing organically wrong with him, beyond what is customarily found in a healthy man of his years, except that his heart's broken. He has nothing further to live for, so he will die. Soul-shocked, I tell you. He'll not eat and he'll not sleep much and he'll gradually wither away and quit."

And that doctor was right. Two weeks later Old Man Tooker was still in bed at that hotel, only he was in a suite now and with a trained nurse in attendance day and night. His bank account had been attached and he could not pay for all this luxury, but his friends did. And that hurt. He lost weight rapidly; he lay in a daze, not eating enough, as the sheriff expressed it, to keep a dicky bird alive. He evinced but one sign of suffering, however. He did not care to see his old friends.

The third week passed and doctors and nurses agreed that Old Man Tooker would never live to greet the day his old friend, the sheriff, would come to serve upon him a writ of execution for his cattle under the judgment obtained by the bank on the chattel mortgage.

On the twenty-ninth day following the scene in the courtroom there came a knock at the door of the parlor in Old Man Tooker's suite. The nurse opened it and beheld a well-dressed, middle-aged man, whose tanned features, broad-brimmed hat and boots denoted the cat-

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tleman. He held his head on one side in a peculiarly deferential manner.

"I want to see Mr. Len Tooker," he said. "May I, please?"

"I'm afraid not. He doesn't wish to see anybody, Mr.——"

"Never mind my name."

"But who shall I say wishes to visit him?"

"He wouldn't know. I doubt if he'd remember me. But I want to see him awfully bad, miss. I hear he's dying."

"I'm afraid he is," the nurse admitted. "Nobody can do anything for him."

"I can cure him," the visitor declared eagerly. "I know what's wrong with him. It'd be wrong with me, too, if I ever had happen to me what's happened to him."

"Are you a doctor?"

"No. But I can cure him."

"How?"

"I can't tell you, miss. It's a secret. I wouldn't want anybody to know it for the world—and I don't think Mr. Tooker would, either. He's a very proud and independent man, they tell me." The visitor came closer. "I was in Kansas City at the convention of the American National Cattlemen's Association and there I heard some Texas cattlemen discussing Len Tooker. So I butted in on the conversation and learned all about what had happened to him—and why. And I came down here to cure him."

"You may not see him," the nurse declared with

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finality. She had come to the conclusion that this stranger was mildly insane.

"I'm sorry," he replied, "but under the circumstances I'll just naturally have to override your authority." He thrust her gently aside and stepped into the room.

Two long strides and he was at the door leading into the bedroom; he entered, closed the door in the nurse's face and locked it. Then he locked the door leading from Old Man Tooker's bedroom into the hall and sat down gingerly on the edge of the bed. Old Man Tooker looked up at him with a faint show of irritation, but said nothing.

"I heard you were ill, Mr. Tooker," the stranger began, "and that there wasn't a thing organically wrong with you. The doctors are right. There isn't. But you've got an awful disease, just the same, and it's known as withering of the bank roll.

"Still, it's not so serious that a check won't cure it, but as my check isn't known in this town and I didn't have an opportunity to get it certified I brought the cash." He leaned over, lifted Old Man Tooker up on his pillow and resumed: "Now, I'm going to deal you a hand, Mr. Tooker, and if it isn't a royal flush I'll go away peaceably and never come back any more."

He drew out a brick of new, crisp yellow-backed thousand-dollar bills, held together at each end with an elastic band. He slipped off the elastic bands and commenced dealing the bills with the ease and rapidity of a trained gambler dealing cards—and he dealt them all to Old Man Tooker, who counted them as they fell and

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was presently aware that half a million dollars in gold certificates lay piled helter-skelter upon his lap. And on the instant Old Man Tooker was cured!

"Who are you?" he yelled. "You're a friend of mine but I don't recognize you."

"You ought to," the visitor complained. "I've got a permanent wave in my neck that puzzles the best doctors in the country, but it shouldn't puzzle you."

"Oh!" gasped Old Man Tooker. "Oh! So it's my black sheep!" And he achieved the miracle of a smile. "You've cured me, John Henry, and if you'll wait a jiffy until I can get dressed and call on that coyote of a banker, I'll cure him. Yes, sir, I'll slam him across the snoot with this gorgeous nosegay—oh, John Henry, John Henry——"

Old Man Tooker closed his eyes tightly, gritted his teeth and held John Henry's hand with a firm grip. After a while he said:

"Your neck's canted to the right. That's because Old Man Henderson's hondoo took you under the left ear. Now, if I was to try hanging you again with the hondoo under the right ear I might cant that neck of yours back into line and we'd all be happy."

"I wouldn't let you, Mr. Tooker. That crooked neck has kept me in the straight and narrow path. Every time I'd see myself in a mirror I'd remember. My oldest boy is named Tooker Denton and my oldest girl is called Lennie—long for Len, you know."

"The old man took your tip and bought me a ranch and I ran it at a profit and paid him back, and when he

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died he was so happy he left me some money—so much, in fact, that the present depression in the cattle business hasn't worried me at all. And don't let it worry you. You'll come back in five years, if you hang onto your cattle.

"All you need is what I once needed—a helping hand. You gave it to me when I needed it and now I'm trying to repay the debt."

"I'll secure you, John Henry."

"I wouldn't be low enough to talk about that now, Mr. Tooker, but seeing as how you're such a proud and independent man I'll charge you four percent and your note will be good enough for me."

"My clothes are in that closet," Old Man Tooker shrilled. "Get 'em for me, John Henry."

So John Henry helped him dress, and then they walked a block to the bank and took up the old man's paper.

"You want this dog-gone banker killed?" John Henry queried, as Old Man Tooker tucked into his wallet the two satisfactions of mortgage.

"Not unless you want that neck of yours straightened. If that's your game, John Henry, go to it with my blessing."

"I didn't think you would, Mr. Tooker, but nevertheless the president of this bank most certainly built a fire under himself—and now I'm going to pour some gasoline on it," and he led Old Man Tooker into the president's office.

Upon the presidential shoulder he laid a gentle acco-

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lade. "You're fired, mister. I've bought the controlling interest in this bank from a lot of your stockholders that got hard up. I suppose you know that the fellow that owns two-thirds of a corporation can do what he blamed pleases with the corporation, don't you? Well, I own two-thirds and I'm going to bust you like you tried to bust my friend, Mr. Tooker.

"This bank isn't so sweet as it might be, so I'm going to sell it cheap to a new bank I'm going to organize, and elect Mr. Tooker president. He'll bring more business to my bank than double the force you have here can handle, and I'm going to give it a name that everybody in this part of Texas knows and loves—a name that will give the shebang a heap of character. I'm going to call it Old Man Tooker's Bank."

"Now laugh that one off," piped Old Man Tooker. "John Henry, come away from here. This place is poisonous!"



Baby's Shoes

By Rupert Hughes



YOUNG as he was, Cass Coe could remember when only men went out between the acts. Nowanights they were outnumbered by the women, nearly all of them smoking and exchanging lights and epigrams, preferably epitaphs, concerning the play and the players on trial inside.

Even on stormy evenings, the women must have their whiffs. The men might turn up their collars, ram their hands in their pockets and stamp about, but the women—look at Meg Thurlow there! in the thinnest of evening dresses, no coat, no hat, no collar!

The blown snow vanished on her bare breast, and twisted spiral puttees about her spider-webbed ankles; but it might have been midsummer confetti for all she cared. She thought only of mending the rouge on her red-enough lips. A cigaret was cocked between the fingers that held the little mirror, and even as she red-penciled her lips she was trying out some of her poisonous jokes before she published them in her next morning's review of the play.

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For Meg Thurlow was a critic—heaven save the mark! By Cass Coe's standards she was nearer illiterate than literary; she had no acquaintance with the theater or the drama except what she had picked up in New York as a newspaper girl; her only gift was a glib typewriter. She was not even flippant, merely flip; a slang-tosser, a wise-cracker. She knew nothing and she knew it.

She left her grammar and her spelling to the copy readers, and never let anybody know that she would have given her little right arm for a classic vocabulary. Lacking it, she rolled her own, and made it as rowdy as possible, like a caricaturist who draws as badly as he can in order to disguise the fact that he could not draw well if he wanted to.

At first nights Meg Thurlow mingled with her gang, but Cass Coe always kept aloof, well outside the shelter of the iron-and-glass marquee and well away from the other critics, both those who printed and those who merely mouthed their comments.

Cass Coe was everything that Meg Thurlow was not, except young. He was a man; he was collegiate, traveled, a wielder of big words and foreign instances. They had only one mood in common, a hatred of sentimentalism—what he called "tosh," what she called "hoke."

When he stood off by himself and sucked an earnest cigaret, everybody who knew him by sight assumed that he was meditating tomorrow's wholesale murder, trying to get himself even better hated than he was.

Now and then of late Meg Thurlow had caught a glance of his skimming her as if she were a peculiarly

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bad actress, sending a chill up and down her spine and frightening her out of her necessary gayety. But she frightened him more, for a delusion was creeping over him like an insanity that she was not altogether unattractive. The very imbecility of the thought fascinated him, dragged his soul along with all the charm of the forbidden, the grip of nonsense.

If Coe's victims could have read the criticisms he was now writing inside his head against himself, they would have felt that he let them off lightly. He was telling himself that he was the rankest fool that ever lived and Meg Thurlow the most stupid, odious, noisy nonentity, the last person on earth for him to fall in love with.

When his eyes reverted to her, they were searching for some fault that would jar him out of his nightmare. Profoundly as he was shaken by the fear of loving her, he was more terrified at the thought of what she would say and do if she found out his secret. And how could a man keep such a secret from such ferret eyes?

He could imagine her doubling up and shrieking when she found out that he loved her. And she would find out some day, for he was increasingly sure that he was going to tell her. Yet, shrill as her cachinnation would be, it would be as nothing to the laughter of the theatrical world. Think of it! Two dramatic critics marrying each other!

The mere thought of love and wedlock grew so abominable to him that he could hardly endure their presentation on the stage except in satire or tragedy or farce. The tender little romances, the homely and familiar

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emotions, the wholesome, normal love stories and rainbow endings that were occasionally exploited on the boards, infuriated him.

By an odd coincidence Meg Thurlow also went after such plays, but her manner was that of tawdry ridicule and burlesque baby-talk.

Night after night—in busy seasons, four or five nights a week—they were present at the same openings and spent the entr'actes within a few feet of each other, yet as far apart as if an ocean sundered them.

At one belated première the last curtain had barely risen before the zero hour when both had to dash for their office desks. As they darted out of the theater into the sudden flurry of a blizzard, both hailed the same solitary taxicab, and almost collided at its door.

Though he knew it meant wet feet, bronchitis and a rebuke from the night city editor, Coe pretended not to be interested in the taxicab at all, and bent his head to the blast to hunt another or push on to the subway.

"Mr. Coe. Oh, Mr. Coe!"

He turned, lifted his hat and held it up while points of ice riddled his hair. The snowflakes were streaming into her red mouth as she stammered:

"This cab—you saw it first. It's got your name on it."

"Thanks ever so much. I couldn't think of depriving Meg Thurlow of her chariot on such a night as this."

"That's mighty swell of you, Lord Chest—Mr. Coe, but you got a dead line to make the same as me."

"It's quite immaterial, really—quite! quite!"

He lifted his hat still higher in air, and was walking

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away again when she faltered: "Couldn't we both use the same boat? I got no reputation to lose, and your good name is perfectly safe with me."

"How clever you always are! I should be honored."

As he helped her in and gave the driver the address of her paper, she said: "How come you know where I work; I didn't think you knew such slummy things."

"I'm not half so innocent as I look," he said.

"Nobody could be," she ventured, then regretted her impudence. But he laughed, sat down and closed the door with the necessary slam.

Locked in together, they spent three blocks trying to translate something into each other's idiom, but neither knew just what to try to translate. Finally he spoke shop with a ponderous lightness: "The play tonight—you liked it, of course."

"Oh, yeah! I liked it like Reverend Straton likes Earl Carroll, and versy visy."

"Wonderfully droll in its noble moments and nobly solemn in its comedy! Really, some of it was——"

"A whiff from the morgue, my dear, a whiff from the morgue."

"Perfectly! And the domestic touches! The proposal under the cotton apple blossoms, the shy lover twiddling his hat and the sterilized heroine hoisting her eyes to heaven——"

"Simpully gra-und! Didn't you just worship it when hard-working Hubby came home from toily-woily and surprised Wifie knitting the doll's undershirt and all

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the—the what Bob Benchley calls ‘the little You-don’t-means’?”

“Sweet! Sweet!”

“To think of Perry Wade and Irene Merrick spilling such molasses even for money. Do you know Perry well?”

“Not even at all. I don’t know a single actor, or actress.”

“You don’t realize what you’re missing. What’s the use of sticking pins in actors if you can’t watch ’em squirm? I’m going to stamp on Perry so hard he’ll have hurty feet the rest of the season.”

But even as they ridiculed the make-believe of the two timorous lovers in the play, they were as comfortably embarrassed by each other as a young farm boy and farm girl out on their first sleigh ride. Coe was wondering why Meg Thurlow seemed so beautiful in the dark, though she was not even pretty in the light, and why her laughter was such music here that had been such stridor on the sidewalk. He was astoundingly tempted to reach out for her hand and squeeze it; then, if she did not faint, to draw her farther shoulder into his elbow and compress her divine torso against his yearning bosom.

He had always been cynical about what went on in dark taxicabs when sophisticated city couples were gathered together. Could it be that they all felt as he did now? He might have been in a church, his reverence for Miss Thurlow was so profound.

And she, the shameless riotous hussy whose criticisms the men on the copy desk would blue-pencil with red

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faces—she who knew everything and said still more—she was panting with timidity before this cherub at her side and wishing that she were as innocent as she wished he thought her.

They rode in a tumultuous silence until they reached her office, where he leaped out to help her from the cab and they fought their way through the wind to her door and were flung together in gorgeous helplessness.

He was almost at his own office before he realized that his patent-leather shoes were full of icy slush and his silk-socked feet ominously dank. As he wrote his criticism he sneezed twice, which always meant that he had caught a bad cold. But he was so professionally the critic that he made mincemeat of the author and the cast and the management with absolute savagery, though his heart was simmering like a fat teakettle sitting on a hearth and singing, "Meg Thurlowthurlow-thurlow-ow-oh-oh!"

At the same time she sat down to her typewriter and misspelled hilarious insults that would drive one poor playwright and a dozen poor actors off Broadway for the whole two weeks of the play's run; yet her heart was also a teakettle jigging on a hob.

Neither of them appeared at the next opening. Which gave extreme delight to four authors, three managers and a cast of forty-two. When the word went round that both Cass Coe and Meg Thurlow had influenza, hundreds of hard-working theatrical people prayed for the success of the microbes and good hunting for the undertakers.

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Coe was the first to reappear at a first night. He looked for Meg and she was not there. This threw him into a mood of such elegy that he wrote sweetly of a playwright whom he really meant to burn alive. He could hardly believe his eyes when he read his criticism in type. And the playwright could hardly believe his.

Even more embarrassed were the managers who had previously consoled themselves by saying: "We've got a hit. Coe roasted the pants off us!" What could they say now that he lauded them? They said: "We've got a hit. Even Cass Coe likes us."

In his alarm over Meg Thurlow's absence from the opening, Cass was betrayed into sending her flowers and a note of sympathy: "Make haste and get well! The most terrible monstrosities are being allowed to live. The theater is going to wrack and ruin."

Meg kissed the note and said to herself, "I must remember to spell 'wrack' with a 'w'." She tried to be witty in her acknowledgment but she wanted to cry over his flowers. She tried to write in his style but there was no dictionary in the hospital and she dared not risk the polysyllables she thought would impress him.

At last she was well and reported for duty, to the acute regret of more than one manager. When Coe saw her among the coroner's curbstone jury, he started toward her with a rush, fell timid and paused till she had lighted her cigaret. She saw him through the match-flare and gulped a throatful of smoke. He thought it more exquisite not to approach her at all.

But when the play was over, by an accident which he

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contrived with some difficulty, they were side by side in the jostle and he dared to mumble: "May I share your humble taxi to the office again?"

She had a girl friend with her, but lost her with a curt, "Good night, Kate! See you soon. I got to dash!"

This taxicab was a little shabbier and joltier than the other, but Cass and Meg found it wheeled with wings. Once more they fell to ridiculing a sentimental play. And this was quaintly embarrassing, for both were in a mood of sugary sentimentality. Through Coe's infatuated head was actually running a refrain:

"They were married and lived happily ever afterward, surrounded by a large and increasing family."

He had almost to bite his lips to keep from stammering: "Gosh, honey, but I'm crazy about you. I don't see how I can live without you a minute longer. If you refuse to be my—my wife, I'll curl up and die."

She was imagining him proposing in blank verse and was giving him the meek, meek answer: "Your love, dear Mr. Coe—oh, dear, oh, very dear Mr. Coe—is the greatest compliment I have ever had or could expect to have, and while I feel myself unworthy of your honored name, I will do my utmost to be a good and dutiful little wife."

Merely thinking of the word "wife" was like swallowing a tack, for he was afraid of her flippant wit and she was afraid of his lofty sarcasm.

It must be a terrible thing to be either sincerely literary and genuinely artistic, or furiously cynical and professionally humorous. The worst of it was that, while they despised commonplace proposals and commonplace ac-

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ceptances, something in them abhorred artistic, literary or humorous courtship as still more vile.

They began to avoid each other because of the confusions when they met, for neither of them dreamed that the other cared. Once more on the sidewalk outings from the theater, he kept aloof, sucking a melancholy cigaret, and she in a gang of cronies whiffed out smoke and vicious buffooneries.

One afternoon they met in the lobby of the Palace. They did not often dignify the variety houses with their important presences, but a famous woman star, Ann Clayborne, was taking the plunge into vaudeville after the failure of an imported drama that had been expected to run the season.

Cass Coe and Meg each had two seats and no companion. So they drifted together to her place. They were intensely uneasy and, hating actors and actresses, acted violently. They saw, or affected to see, high artistic quality in the performance of a trained sow whom Meg called "Duse" and in a particularly foolish clown whom Coe called "Aristophanes"—a prominent French comedian, Meg supposed.

It was safe for them to praise animals and clowns, but there was no profit for them in Ann Clayborne, since anybody could lay another bouquet at her feet. But to flay her alive as a Philistine would cause a sensation. The opportunity was too obvious to resist. Besides, she had selected for her vehicle a hackneyed, sure-fire sketch so ancient that it was actually full of soliloquies and pompous unnecessary asides of the old school.

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The plot was no more novel: a husband and wife of great wealth, and therefore great misery, had drifted apart spiritually and were about to separate. She had a lover with whom she was almost tempted to err, while the husband was keeping a lady who was politely referred to as "an establishment."

At the rise of the curtain, the wife was shown packing up for her departure after a bitter quarrel, which she explained in a lengthy solo. When she finally made an exit R 2 E, the husband entered L 1 E and told himself his side of the story. Then he went out L U E to pack. The wife returned R 2 E with a collection of trinkets which she began to sort out, carrying on a fervid conversation with nobody.

Cass Coe and Meg Thurlow had gone to so many plays that they could usually foresee what was preparing. He whispered: "Choose your nearest exit and walk to it. Don't run. I sniff what's coming."

"So do I. She's going to bring out a pair of their dead baby's shoes."

"Don't scream! Don't faint! Maybe she won't quite dare."

"It doesn't seem as if Ann Clayborne could do that to us. Really, you know, they ought to raid the theater if she does. She can't. She can't!"

"There they come!"

The actress turned up a little beribboned bundle, untied a baby-blue knot, and disclosed a pair of almost infinitesimal shoelets. Whereupon nearly everyone in the

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audience began to shed tears, and Ann Clayborne most of all.

The only four dry eyes in the theater turned and met in a gaze of wrath.

"The cheap faker!" growled Coe. "I'll have her life for this."

Meg whispered: "Ann Clayborne's spilling over, too."

"Crocodile tears!"

"No, they're genuine. She's blowing her nose. A sure sign."

Both of them made surreptitious pencil notes on their programs as the brutal husband lumbered in L U E, glared and snarled: "What are you mooning over there? Some gift from your paramour, I fancy."

Speechless with grief, the wife held out a hand in whose palm sat the two tiny bootees. Sir Ronald leered at them, paused, choked, muttered: "Our baby's shoes! Our baby's shoes! Oh, had he but lived! His little feet perchance had guided us to happiness."

Then tears turned his eyes into glowing soap bubbles and the audience went quite to pieces, men and women moaning aloud.

Coe thought of a ferocious sarcasm but did not whisper it to Meg. He owed it to his paper. Besides, his throat was suddenly so dry that he wondered if he were catching cold again.

She whispered without quite looking at him: "There's an awful draft here. I think I'm catching cold——" She blew her nose as exquisitely as possible.

Coe blinked his eyelids hard. It was unbearable that

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he should choke up at such a moment. People might think he was crying over the maudlin playlet. He wrote on his program: "Ann Clayborne's assault on emotions—positively obscene."

Meg Thurlow wrote on hers: "Salt-water shower bath. Clayborne stoops to conquer—flashes pair of dead baby's shoes. Where censors? No police in this man's town?"

The air of the theater was jarred with the mourning of Sir Ronald, who outsobbed his wife in a broken antiphony of "Do you remember——" and "Can you forget——" until the ghost of the child seemed to return to fill the tiny shoes again, and to draw the orphaned parents back into each other's arms for the curtain, "the wettest curtain of the year," Meg noted. "Preposterous, orgiastic lachrymosity," wrote Coe.

The actor and the actress wept in their own characters as well as in their rôles. While the curtain went up and down they were still crying. The audience was a complete wreck.

The language of the play had been stilted as old language always seems to be; as our homeliest colloquies will seem in a score of years. The situation was as artificial as our most natural plots will seem when (and if) they are revived in fifty years. But to the audience the plot was real because it was visibly enacted, its elements all too well known.

A man and wife had loved, had seen a child born to them, had heard it laugh and cry, stumble and fall, had watched it grow until it had shoes to wear, and then had

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seen it die, had buried it and now had left of it nothing but the bits of leather they had once buttoned over the feet they had once kissed. The audience did not fret about literature of dramaturgy of artistic repression; it remembered the bitterness of death and its inartistic butchery of little babies. No playwright's bungling could belittle the cruelty of experience.

Cass and Meg knew much that the mob did not know, but they had never had babies and watched them die. They were by trade protectors of big emotions from unskillful hands, but they could not protect audiences from funerals. They were professional surgeons looking for places that needed the knife, and they resented the simplicity of the plot because they themselves were almost overthrown by the massive sorrow that swept the theater. They resented the fact that in spite of everything they might write, Ann Clayborne's season was already an assured triumph, and her new public would never read the withering comments of the "legitimate" critics.

When they left the Palace, Coe said: "You don't have to get your copy in for hours. Neither do I. What would you say to a little stroll in the park?"

"I'd say swell!" she said, and wished she had murmured, "What a chahming sudjestion!"

They walked up Seventh Avenue to the Fifty-ninth Street gate and entered a realm of forlorn beauty. The park was a vast wastebasket filled with the rubbish of the autumnal festival, old leaves and flowers, tawdry and trite and innumerable as dead babies' shoes.

They walked and mocked until she was so tired that

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she sank on a bench to rest. He sat by her, and felt his hands twitching towards hers like the hands of a puppet. The primeval spell of the twilight wrapped them up in the same blanket, and they both began to shiver—from being too warm, though they agreed that it was too chill to sit out longer, meaning the opposite.

"If you catch cold again," he said, "heaven knows who's to protect the public from the managers."

"So long as you're on the job."

"Me? The speculators sit up all night to read my notices so as to be first to buy up what I roast."

"Then why don't you praise Ann Clayborne so as to put her on the blink?"

"There are limits beyond which even I wouldn't go."

She supposed that one of his limits barred her from the territory of his affections.

They ate apart, united in loneliness, and vented their rage on Ann Clayborne and her sketch. They wrote so venomously that she tried to have them both discharged. But their managing editors realized that critics are best advertised by the mangled remains.

A bad dramatic season ended early and they took their vacations in the same countryside. This was not occult, since he managed to ask her carelessly where she was going for the summer, and to exclaim: "What a coincidence! That's exactly where I was going."

The dramatic season ended early but the farmer's season opened late, and they reached their rural haven before all the peach blossoms were off the trees. They wandered together through an orchard of them, and he

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was reminded of the production they had laughed at on their first taxicab acquaintance.

They sat on the warm grass and he said, twisting his hat round and round: "I suppose that, according to all stage canons, I ought to twist my hat round and round and propose."

"And according to the author, I have to yes you?"

"Yes." He looked at her quizzically. She smiled back at him. But underneath their grins there was yearning, and something pushed him on into the scene. "I'm twisting my hat round and round," he mumbled.

"So I see." She smiled wryly.

"And now I am going to propose. Prompt me if I fade. Evelyn—er—Margaret——"

"Yes, Harold—Cass—there ought to be more to the name than that one syllable."

"Well, my parents really named me after my uncle Jonathan Cass, but I dropped the Jonathan."

"It's just what I need. 'Yes, Jonathan—go on—you were saying——?'"

"'Margaret, you must have noticed in my attentions to you something more than friendship.'"

"I cast my eyes down and simper, 'Why, Jonathan! What ever do you mean?'"

"'I mean—I mean—oh, Margaret, I—I love you. Could you—would you—will you—be mine?'"

"'Oh, Jonathan!'"

"Then on the stage she fell into his open arms and they kissed each other. My arms are open."

"Here I come."

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She rocked over into his arms, trying to play burlesque, and he—he hesitated to kiss her, but fearing to make too much of the parody by skipping the business, kissed her—once because the rôle called for it, once because her lips were so sweet.

They broke away in a daze when an automobile passing in the road hooted at them with the raucous mockery of a critic's voice.

They looked after it with the shamed rage of an actor and actress who have been taunted for their sincerity. Then they forgot it and looked at each other.

She mumbled: "You're on the wrong side of the foot-lights, Jonathan. As an actor you're—well, you're almost convincing."

"That's because I'm convinced," he answered.

"Of what?"

"That I'm simply crazy about you, honey, and if you don't marry me, I'll—I'll curl up and die like one of these worm-eaten peach blossoms."

"You're gagging now. That line isn't in the 'script. You can't start ad-libbing, you know."

"I mean it, my darling, my angel, my—oh, Lord, if I only had a vocabulary!"

"If you only had! Well, what about me? I only know ten words and I can't spell any of them."

"Can you spell 'Y-e-s' before I die of terror?"

"Why-ee, yes," she moaned and he gave an excellent imitation of a good actor embracing a good actress. They were sillier than any couple would ever dare to be on the stage, and their pranks and prattle would have disgusted

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them if they had seen them performed by anybody else.

One of the first things he had to do was to motor to his mother's home in Connecticut and take Meg along to flaunt her before his family. Meg had no parents of her own.

Whatever his mother may really have thought of Meg, she saw that the girl had restored to a joyous childhood the preternaturally solemn scholar and cynic her baby had grown into. To his mother he was still "Johnny" and she was soon bringing out old photographs of her son before he became the terror of Broadway, the scourge of the theater. The photographs grew older and older as the subject grew younger and younger.

Seeing that Meg was more and more rapturous as her lover drew nearer and nearer to infancy, Mrs. Coe finally said:

"But wait! Wait till I show you the best of all my treasures."

Meg did not suspect the worst until Mrs. Coe came in with a parcel tied in a baby-blue ribbon, drew the knot and, as Meg would have said if it had been anybody else, "did an Ann Clayborne."

Cass heard a curious choking sound and, supposing that Meg was trying to gulp down a laugh, shot a glance at her, and found her nuzzling the little shoes to her cheeks and cooing gibberish at them while tears dripped from her blubbered eyes to her pursed lips.

He gasped: "Is this the author of the 'salt-water shower bath' line that threw Ann Clayborne into a fit?"

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Have you forgotten what you printed about baby's shoes?"

"But these are yours!" she pleaded.

And that made all the difference in the world. "Those are mine!" is war. "These are yours!" is love.

With them marriage was a problem that they could not solve with a dramatist's ease. She had no parents and no money except her salary. He had one mother who had just enough to live on, and his salary was not quite enough for him to live on alone.

If he and Meg got married, her paper, which hated his, would never allow her to keep her job. They would both have to live on his salary and, worse, she would have to stop writing. He did not want to quench her bright talent.

They had many a long parley on the subject, and agreed that they could neither live apart nor together. Still, starvation was unquestionably preferable to separation. She solved the riddle by proposing a secret marriage.

"You keep your job. I keep mine. We go to our offices separately. We live together in our own little flatlet."

"But people will find it out and suspect the worst."

"So long as we know we're honest, what do we care?"

"But I can't have you criticized."

"Criticism is our business and we ought to be able to take a little of our own medicine."

"No, it's too dangerous."

"The one best thing about New York is the way people mind their own business. You can even be good secretly and nobody interferes."

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It was not hard to manage a wedding without publicity. They took out a license as Jonathan C. Coe and Julia M. Thurlow and nobody guessed that the dragon and the harpy who preyed on the theater had decided to nest together.

When the season opened in the early autumn, they were chiefly shocked to find how little attention anybody paid to their private lives. The people on the same floor did not even know their names or their faces.

They tried to live economically and save a little and they tried to earn increases of salary. There was only one way to do this and that was to make their columns more interesting, and the only way to do this was to make them more ferocious. Nobody wants to visit a battlefield where nobody was hurt, but people travel miles to inspect Gettysburg or Waterloo.

So these merry young people were increasingly impossible to please. They took pains to avoid a duplication of phrases or opinions and tossed a penny to decide which was to commit murder and which only mayhem.

They supposed they had fooled everybody, but they found that they could not quite fool nature.

She had trampled on Perry Wade and Irene Merrick for playing a scene, and on Arthur Miller for writing a scene, in which Hubby came home from toily-woily and Wifie had to break the news to him very gently. She found herself cast for exactly the same rôle and she heard her elegantly educated husband gasp, "You don't mean——?"

Here was a how-d'ye-do indeed! She could no longer

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go to plays to tear them to pieces without creating more of a sensation by her appearance than by anything she might say. For all her contempt of scandal, she had now somebody else to think of. She must have at once the protection of some good man's name and she must give up her job as dramatic critic for a much more critical job.

He and Meg wrote and rewrote a hundred solutions to their problem. They were like the numberless collaborators they had reviled for coming into the theater with a good first act and perhaps a good second act but no knowledge of where to go from there. They could not postpone production or rewrite the first two acts or recast or do anything but let the play go on.

Hunting madly for some inspiration, they fell into the bog. There was nothing for her to do but resign; nothing for him to do but announce that Cass Coe and Meg Thurlow had been secretly married during the previous summer.

When the season ended they retreated to his mother's home in the Connecticut village and there the star of their play made his well-timed entrance upon the stage of this world.

Everything that was familiar and plebeian and inartistic and cheaply melodramatic took place according to the most hackneyed formulas. The whole performance was a plagiarism from the ancient original.

The mother did as well as could be expected and so did the father. If there was any criticism of the child it must have come from the neighbors, not from the critics who wrote it. They found no fault in it except

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perhaps a too-fervent love of night life and a somewhat theatrical town-crierish delivery of its emotions.

It had a tendency to rant and saw the air with feet as well as hands, and its expressions were not always in the best taste. But it was a baby, it was their baby, and they were as properly idiotic about it as decent parents ought to be.

The best of it was that it thrived and fattened and when they went back to town, it was hale and hearty enough to prosper in the little flat that came within their doubly restricted means.

Evening after evening Cass left his dove-cote and went forth like a night watchman to fend off nefarious playwrights and actors from pilfering the public's spending money. He was as soft-hearted a home-body as ever cut a throat for the sake of his loved ones.

His readers expected a certain line of goods from him, so he did his work honestly, flayed nearly everybody he saw for some reason or other, and continued to build up his name as "the most fearless critic in New York."

He was the least fearless person in town. He was afraid of his baby's least cough, his wife's least pain, his doctor, his landlord, his managing editor, his public. He was frightened to death at every play he visited lest it fail to suggest a good basting for itself.

Meg went to the theater with him when they could persuade a neighbor to stay with the baby, but the cleverest mystery plays had no suspense for her compared with the almost insufferable anxiety as to what the baby

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might be doing, what it might have fallen out of or into, or swallowed or the reverse.

Her husband continued to abuse playwrights for purveying staple goods to regular customers who demanded only that the reliable old nursery plots be served fresh every season—so much Cinderella stuff, so many Misses Muffet with rich spiders to alarm them, so many Babes-in-the-Wood, so many ogres and gold-digging sorceresses.

Yet the Coes did not criticize their offspring because he followed the ancient routines. They were glad that he was neither precocious nor eccentric. They called him perfect because he conformed to the libretto for standardized children.

At eleven months he took up walking, but they never complained of his lack of originality. It was a wonder that he was able to walk at all, for his father was always threatening to bite his toes off and his mother nearly kissed his insteps away. It was apparently going to take him almost as long to evolve from a crawler to a quadruped and thence to a standing posture as it did the human race. But eventually he was ready to walk.

It was a great day when they bought him his first shoes and they studied the petty brogans as if they were high-art jewelry or Gobelin tapestry. They buttoned them over the stubby socks with the ceremony of squires buckling armor on a knight. Surely no young conquistador had ever before set out on so majestic a pilgrimage with such courage.

Meg and Cass were as anxious for him in his effort

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to traverse the three-foot gulf between Meg's knees and Cass' knees as if he were Blondel crossing Niagara Falls on a tight-rope. The whole world was a tight-rope to that baby, and he was forever falling off it with a thud that shot the tears from his eyes.

He wore out more cotton in his didy-bumping than leather in his walking. Sometimes he screamed with despair; sometimes he laughed at his own collapse. But always, whether tragedian or clown, his parents were of the same opinion. He had moods of dare-devil fearlessness when he would strike out for hot steam-radiators or sharp-cornered tables, and he had humors of poltroonery when he would not trust his gocart to support him.

They spent hours of ecstasy watching him take off, wobble like a little sot, kick up when he should have stepped forward, wildly clutch the air for support, spin, topple and return to earth with a crash or a splash, according to which end he fell on. There was a parental panic, a dash to save him from drowning in the rug, and a vast outpouring of sympathy and praise.

When at last he could cross the whole width of their little living room he was a Marathon winner, and his father said: "That young man will go striding down through history. I hope he won't want to be President of the United States, but he can if he wants to."

Instead, he went striding down through the dark portal where so many babies go before they become anything else. One night there was a note in his whimpering that was not from a pin or a bruise or a flare of temper.

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There was a heat in his brow that terrified the barefooted young father and mother shivering over his crib. There was a frantic telephoning for a doctor. There was a cradleful of agony and terror, writhings of torment. The fever paled away to white ice, the fluttering whimper sighed out in an unbearable silence.

Their baby was one of the innumerable multitude and they learned what sorrow can be. They joined the endless caravan of parents who have loved and lost. They clung together for days and nights sobbing, choking, reaching out for a warmth that was in a grave.

They sat about, not daring to look at each other, their eyes tracing across the floor the crazy path of invisible little drunken feet vanished in scalding tears.

And now in their bitterness they turned their critical eloquence against the Author of the world and of Life, the cheap melodrama that tortures little babies for a thrill, the drama that is always preparing scenes that never come off, the shuffle of morbid horrors and horse-play. They agreed that life was a rotten farce and they strove for the most arrant blasphemies they could contrive. Yet the play proceeded. It was one play they could not walk out on, and criticism of it was even more ineffective than their professional censures.

Their rage wore away into a somber melancholy and they mocked their own high hopes, their childish plans.

One lonely, lonely evening Cass said with a bitter wit: "He could have been President of the United States if he had wanted to—but he—he didn't want to. He didn't want to!"

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Cass went forward to his knees and buried his head in the lap of the forlorn little Meg. He kept sobbing, "Mamma! Mamma!" because there was no one else to call her that. Her tears rained in his hair; her frantic hands fumbled about his shoulders, clutching, groping. She threw her arms wide, pleading, "Baby! My baby, come back! Come back!"

Their only treasury was the bureau where they hoarded the piles of little bonnets, and socks, and shirts, the ribbons, the mittens, the toys, and the shoes, scuffed and shabby and wrinkled from the buffetings of his fat feet.

The shoes were the hardest to endure. The other things had meant that their baby slept, or was at peace. But the shoes meant their hero on the march, striving forward, pushing on toward his destiny. He tried to learn, he learned; he tottered and shrieked and clutched and sprawled; but he was up again, on his knees, on all fours, hoisting himself, balancing, fighting the rearward tug that would make him sit down hard, fighting the sidewise pull and the dizzy spells, lifting a cautious foot, wondering if he could plant it before—he was on the floor again, up again, gone again.

Hearts are not often softened in the breaking, and the broadening of sympathy that should come from experience of woe is more often celebrated than encountered. Certainly Cass Coe and his wife felt no sudden attitudinism toward inept playwrights and miscast actors because their own lives had been botched.

Rather were they the harder to please, the harder to

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excite, the harder to impress. They were apt to despise the concocted griefs and the rehearsed deaths of hirelings who died six nights a week, and at matinées on Thursdays, Saturdays and holidays.

The paper that Meg had worked for, having had poor luck with her successors, offered her her old position, without asking her to resign her husband. She took up her work with a bitter zest. Her humor was more savage, her audacity hair-raising.

She and her husband were Druid priest and priestess bloodily sacrificing playwrights, actors, producers to their dreadful god. They did not know just what their god was or what he wanted, but they took their priest-craft with all the more solemnity.

They fiercely resented being overwhelmed by dramatic surprises or *tours de force*. In all sincerity they felt it their sacred mission to humble the mighty. They aimed to look like sphinxes in the theater.

But once away from their theater seats and their offices where they practiced vivisection without anæsthetics, they were the meekest, the most life-beaten and forlorn pair of mourning doves. They toiled and saved, hoping to get away to Europe, away from the gnawing monotony of their grief.

Late in the spring, Ann Clayborne found her play closing and went back into vaudeville, where she resumed her old sketch, "by request."

The announcements of her reversion to this atrocity, the fanfare, the lights, the big advertisements every-

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where, were slaps in the face to the Coes, who had long since condemned the old hack-horse to the bone yard.

Cass resolved to have another whack at it. He took it for the theme of his Sunday "sermon." He did not need to see it, for it was seared in his memory, so he wrote his essay in advance, something to this effect:

"Grief has its place in the theater, and a high place. The Greeks called the cleansing of the heart's bitterness by tears *katharsis*. But the moderns have, as usual, be-meaned both the word and the lofty purpose. And now we see actors and actresses so cheap in their tear-sneaking trickeries that they might be said to pollute their audiences.

"While Euripides has been praised for his humanity and for his 'droppings of warm tears,' he was placed only third among the masters. What place, then, can we assign to the crass and contemptuous methods of certain culprits who massage the tear-ducts by brute force until they are exhausted? Parents who have suffered the deepest of bereavements should be warned against Ann Clayborne's return to vaudeville in that unspeakable old mop-rag of hers with which she plays tunes on the most sacred emotions, pulls out the tremolo stop and uses up half a dozen handkerchiefs.

"There is something odious in such bargain sales of artificial sorrows, such auctioneering of counterfeit anguish, and one can only regret that so clever a mime should grow so maudlin and exude gallons of brine on cue twice a day even for money."

Cass felt better after getting this out of his typewriter

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and Meg said it was swell. As Clayborne's leading man was new they thought they should make an appearance at the theater to justify the onslaught.

At the Palace they did not find the acrobats so artistic, or the clowns so funny, as they had hoped. When Ann Clayborne's name was flashed and the curtain rose on her same old monologue, they listened to it with the calm of familiarity.

When she spoke her long piece about the baby and her joy in it, and its death, the hearts of Meg and Coe swelled till they smothered. This was old territory to them now, and every stilted phrase was high tragedy beyond the reach of stilts. Old words, old ashes of old woes rained on their souls, which were in ashes. Their hands met and clenched in a reawakened agony.

When the actress slowly revealed the bundle and her tears rattled on the paper while her shivering fingers twitched at the knot, Cass Coe gaped like an idiot to keep from crying out in pain.

When the shoes, the little property shoes, were lifted from the whispering tissue, Meg bent her head to the knotted hands and wept helplessly.

The theater reverberated as with drums. Ann Clayborne and the actor with her had no need of straining for grief. They were helplessly swept along with the flood.

As the curtain fell, Cass dragged Meg up and along to the aisle. They ran with their heads bent, fearing to be discovered in their shame when the lights went high. They were glad of the dozen curtain calls, for they had

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time in the gloomy alley back of the seats to dry their tears and their briny faces.

They swung out into the lobby and faced Broadway blinking. Usually they walked home, but now they ran to a taxicab. Cass pretended to have an appalling cold as he climbed in. They clung together and wept again. In their apartment they ran to see again the shoes of their baby, and Meg whispered as they kissed them, and each other:

"These are ours!"

When they had wept themselves out, they felt mystically comforted, and put the shoes away in a kind of pride because of the high tragedy that had distinguished their humble lives.

For a long while they forgot the article on Ann Clayborne. Meg saw it by the typewriter.

"What about this?" she said.

"I'll have another look at it," said Cass. She hung her chin on his shoulder and read it with him. Some of the clauses were so good that he read them aloud:

"The Greeks called the cleansing of the heart's bitterness by tears *katharsis*. But the moderns . . . tear-sneaking trickeries . . . Euripides . . . only third among the masters . . . Ann Clayborne's unspeakable old mop-rag . . . most sacred emotions . . . tremolo stop . . ."

"Sweet! Beautiful!" sighed Meg.

"Bargain sales of artificial sorrows . . . counterfeit, maudlin . . . exude . . . brine . . . for money.'"

They agreed that his work was good.

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"That'll make 'em sit up. Let's let it ride, eh?"

"Let's."

So he sent it to the paper and it was printed. Ann Clayborne read it in the Sunday edition late Saturday night. She was only a little angry. She had heard how Cass Coe had cried so hard that he could hardly find his way out of the theater. She smiled.

She was booked solid for fifty-two weeks at a salary that made the combined earnings of the Coes pitiful. Her business was making the public weep. Their business was making actors weep. Both were paid according to the number of their victims. Both were responding to the human need for emotion and for suspicion, for surrender and for defiance.

When the season was over, the Coes had saved enough for a trip abroad and they had orders for articles that would keep them in what they called luxury. They could not have afforded the voyage at all if they had not been spared the bother and expense of a baby.

Yet they were not grateful, these confirmed critics of everything. In sheer despite, they took the baby along, and wherever they went, they heard between them the shuffling trot of little shoes. They walked slowly, slowly, so that certain feet should not have to run too fast or tire too soon.



A Very Honorable Guy

By Damon Runyon



FF and on I know Feet Samuels a matter of eight or ten years, up and down Broadway, and in and out, but I never have much truck with him because he is a guy I consider no dice. In fact, he does not mean a thing.

In the first place, Feet Samuels is generally broke, and there is no percentage in hanging around brokers. The way I look at it, you are not going to get anything off a guy who has not got anything. So while I am very sorry for brokers, and am always willing to hope that they get hold of something, I do not like to be around them. Long ago an old-timer who knows what he is talking about says to me:

"My boy," he says, "always try to rub up against money, for if you rub up against money long enough, some of it may rub off on you."

So in all the years I am around this town, I always try to keep in with the high shots and guys who carry these large coarse bank notes around with them, and I stay away from small operators and chisellers and brokers.

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And Feet Samuels is one of the worst brokers in this town, and has been such as long as I know him.

He is a big heavy guy with several chins and very funny feet, which is why he is called Feet. These feet are extra large feet, even for a big guy, and Dave the Dude says Feet wears violin cases for shoes. Of course this is not true, because Feet cannot get either of his feet in a violin case, unless it is a case for a very large violin, such as a cello.

I see Feet one night in the Hot Box, which is a night club, dancing with a doll by the name of Hortense Hathaway, who is in Georgie White's "Scandals," and what is she doing but standing on Feet's feet as if she is on sled runners, and Feet never knows it. He only thinks the old gondolas are a little extra heavy to shove around this night, because Hortense is no invalid. In fact, she is a good rangy welterweight.

She has blond hair and plenty to say, and her square monoger is Annie O'Brien, and not Hortense Hathaway at all. Furthermore, she comes from Newark, which is in New Jersey, and her papa is a taxi jockey by the name of Skush O'Brien, and a very rough guy at that, if anybody asks you. But of course the daughter of a taxi jockey is as good as anybody else for Georgie White's "Scandals" as long as her shape is okay, and nobody ever hears any complaint from the customers about Hortense on this proposition.

She is what is called a show girl, and all she has to do is to walk around and about Georgie White's stage with only a few light bandages on and everybody con-

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siders her very beautiful, especially from the neck down, although personally I never care much for Hortense because she is very fresh to people. I often see her around the night clubs, and when she is in these deadfalls Hortense generally is wearing quite a number of diamond bracelets and fur wraps, and one thing and another, so I judge she is not doing bad for a doll from Newark, New Jersey.

Of course Feet Samuels never knows why so many other dolls besides Hortense are wishing to dance with him, but gets to thinking maybe it is because he has the old sex appeal and he is very sore indeed when Henri, the head waiter at the Hot Box, asks him to please stay off the floor except for every tenth dance, because Feet's feet take up so much room when he is on the floor that only two other dancers can work out at the same time, it being a very small floor.

I must tell you more about Feet's feet, because they are very remarkable feet indeed. They go off at different directions under him, very sharp, so if you see Feet standing on a corner it is very difficult to tell which way he is going, because one foot will be headed one way, and the other foot the other way. In fact, guys around Mindy's restaurant often make bets on this proposition as to which way Feet is headed when he is standing still.

What Feet Samuels does for a living is the best he can, which is the same thing many other guys in this town do for a living. He hustles some around the race tracks and crap games and prize fights, picking up a few bobs here and there as a runner for the bookmakers, or scalp-

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ing bets, or steering suckers, but he is never really in the money in his whole life. He is always owing and always paying off, and I never see him but what he is troubled with the shorts as regards to dough.

The only good thing you can say about Feet Samuels is he is very honorable about his debts, and what he owes he pays when he can. Anybody will tell you this about Feet Samuels although of course it is only what any hustler such as Feet must do if he wishes to protect his credit and keep in action. Still, you will be surprised how many guys forget to pay.

It is because Feet's word is considered good at all times that he is nearly always able to raise a little dough, even off The Brain, and The Brain is not an easy guy for anybody to raise dough off of. In fact, The Brain is very tough about letting people raise dough off of him.

If anybody gets any dough off of The Brain he wishes to know right away what time they are going to pay it back, with certain interest, and if they say at five-thirty Tuesday morning, they better not make it five-thirty-one Tuesday morning, or The Brain will consider them very unreliable and never let them have any money again. And when a guy loses his credit with The Brain he is in a very tough spot indeed in this town, for The Brain is the only man who always has dough.

Furthermore, some very unusual things often happen to guys who get money off of The Brain and fail to kick it back just when they promise, such as broken noses and sprained ankles and other injuries, for The Brain has people around him who seem to resent guys getting

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dough off of him and not kicking it back. Still, I know of The Brain letting some very surprising guys have dough, because he has a bug that he is a wonderful judge of guys' characters, and that he is never wrong on them, although I must say that no guy who gets dough off of The Brain is more surprising than Feet Samuels.

The Brain's right name is Armand Rosenthal, and he is called The Brain because he is so smart. He is well known to one and all in this town as a very large operator in gambling, and one thing and another, and nobody knows how much dough The Brain has, except that he must have plenty, because no matter how much dough is around, The Brain sooner or later gets hold of all of it. Some day I will tell you more about The Brain, but right now I wish to tell you about Feet Samuels.

It comes on a tough winter in New York, what with nearly all hands who have the price going to Miami and Havana and New Orleans, leaving the brokers behind. There is very little action of any kind in town with the high shots gone, and one night I run into Feet Samuels in Mindy's, and he is very sad indeed. He asks me if I happen to have a finnif on me, but of course I am not giving finnifs to guys like Feet Samuels, and finally he offers to compromise with me for a deuce, so I can see things must be very bad with Feet for him to come down from five dollars to two.

"My rent is away overdue for the shovel and broom," Feet says, "and I have a hard-hearted landlady who will not listen to reason. She says she will give me the wind if I do not lay something on the line at once. Things are

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never so bad with me," Feet says, "and I am thinking of doing something very desperate."

I cannot think of anything very desperate for Feet Samuels to do, except maybe go to work, and I know he is not going to do such a thing no matter what happens. In fact, in all the years I am around Broadway I never know any broker to get desperate enough to go to work.

I once hear Dave the Dude offer Feet Samuels a job riding rum between here and Philly at good wages, but Feet turns it down because he claims he cannot stand the open air, and anyway Feet says he hears riding rum is illegal and may land a guy in the pokey. So I know whatever Feet is going to do will be nothing difficult.

"The Brain is still in town," I say to Feet. "Why do you not put the lug on him? You stand okay with him."

"There is the big trouble," Feet says. "I owe The Brain a C note already, and I am supposed to pay him back by four o'clock Monday morning, and where I am going to get a hundred dollars I do not know, to say nothing of the other ten I must give him for interest."

"What are you figuring on doing?" I ask, for it is now a Thursday, and I can see Feet has very little time to get together such a sum.

"I am figuring on scragging myself," Feet says, very sad. "What good am I to anybody? I have no family and no friends, and the world is packing enough weight without me. Yes, I think I will scrag myself."

"It is against the law to commit suicide in this man's town," I say, "although what the law can do to a guy

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who commits suicide I am never able to figure out."

"I do not care," Feet says. "I am sick and tired of it all. I am especially sick and tired of being broke. I never have more than a few quarters to rub together in my pants pocket. Everything I try turns out wrong. The only thing that keeps me from scragging myself at once is the C note I owe The Brain, because I do not wish to have him going around after I am dead and gone saying I am no good. And the toughest thing of all," Feet says, "is I am in love. I am in love with Hortense."

"Hortense?" I say, very much astonished indeed. "Why, Hortense is nothing but a big——"

"Stop!" Feet says. "Stop right here! I will not have her called a big boloney or whatever else big you are going to call her, because I love her. I cannot live without her. In fact," Feet says, "I do not wish to live without her."

"Well," I say, "what does Hortense think about you loving her?"

"She does not know it," Feet says. "I am ashamed to tell her, because naturally if I tell her I love her, Hortense will expect me to buy her some diamond bracelets, and naturally I cannot do this. But I think she likes me more than somewhat, because she looks at me in a certain way. But," Feet says, "there is some other guy who likes her also, and who is buying her diamond bracelets and what goes with them, which makes it very tough on me. I do not know who the guy is, and I do not think Hortense cares for him so much, but naturally any doll must give serious consideration to a guy who can buy her

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diamond bracelets. So I guess there is nothing for me to do but scrag myself."

Naturally I do not take Feet Samuels serious, and I forget about his troubles at once, because I figure he will wiggle out some way, but the next night he comes into Mindy's all pleased up, and I figure he must make a scratch somewhere, for he is walking like a man with about sixty-five dollars on him.

But it seems Feet only has an idea, and very few ideas are worth sixty-five dollars.

"I am laying in bed thinking this afternoon," Feet says, "and I get to thinking how I can raise enough dough to pay off The Brain, and maybe a few other guys, and my landlady, and leave a few bobs over to help bury me. I am going to sell my body."

Well, naturally I am somewhat bewildered by this statement, so I ask Feet to explain, and here is his idea: He is going to find some doctor who wishes a dead body and sell his body to this doctor for as much as he can get, the body to be delivered after Feet scrag himself, which is to be within a certain time.

"I understand," Feet says, "that these croakers are always looking for bodies to practice on, and that good bodies are not easy to get nowadays."

"How much do you figure your body is worth?" I ask.

"Well," Feet says, "a body as big as mine ought to be worth at least a G."

"Feet," I say, "this all sounds most gruesome to me. Personally I do not know much about such a proposition,

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but I do not believe if doctors buy bodies at all that they buy them by the pound. And I do not believe you can get a thousand dollars for your body, especially while you are still alive, because how does a doctor know if you will deliver your body to him?"

"Why," Feet says, very indignant, "everybody knows I pay what I owe. I can give The Brain for reference, and he will okay me with anybody for keeping my word."

Well, it seems to me that there is very little sense to what Feet Samuels is talking about, and anyway I figure that maybe he blows his top, which is what often happens to brokers, so I pay no more attention to him. But on Monday morning, just before four o'clock, I am in Mindy's, and what happens but in walks Feet with a handful of money, looking much pleased.

The Brain is also there at the table where he always sits facing the door so nobody can pop in on him without him seeing them first, because there are many people in this town that The Brain likes to see first if they are coming in where he is. Feet steps up to the table and lays a C note in front of The Brain and also a sawbuck, and The Brain looks up at the clock and smiles and says:

"Okay, Feet, you are on time."

It is very unusual for The Brain to smile about anything, but afterwards I hear he wins two C's off of Manny Mandelbaum, who bets him Feet will not pay off on time, so The Brain has a smile coming.

"By the way, Feet," The Brain says, "some doctor calls me up today and asks me if your word is good and

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you may be glad to know I tell him you are one hundred percent. I put the okay on you because I know you never fail to deliver on a promise. Are you sick, or something?"

"No," Feet says, "I am not sick. I just have a little business deal on with the guy. Thanks for the okay."

Then he comes over to the table where I am sitting, and I can see he still has money left in his duke. Naturally I am anxious to know where he makes the scratch, and by and by he tells me.

"I put over the proposition I am telling you about," Feet says. "I sell my body to a doctor over on Park Avenue by the name of Bodeeker, but I do not get a G for it as I expect. It seems bodies are not worth much right now because there are so many on the market, but Doc Bodeeker gives me four C's on thirty days' delivery.

"I never know it is so much trouble selling a body before," Feet says. "Three doctors call the cops on me when I proposition them, thinking I am daffy, but Doc Bodeeker is a nice old guy and is glad to do business with me, especially when I give The Brain as reference. Doc Bodeeker says he is looking for a head shaped just like mine for years, because it seems he is a shark on heads. But," Feet says, "I got to figure out some way of scragging myself besides jumping out a window, like I plan, because Doc Bodeeker does not wish my head mussed up."

"Well," I say, "this is certainly most ghastly to me and does not sound legitimate. Does The Brain know you sell your body?"

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"No," Feet says, "Doc Bodecker only asks him over the phone if my word is good and does not tell him why he wishes to know, but he is satisfied with The Brain's okay. Now I am going to pay my landlady, and take up a few other markers here and there, and feed myself up good until it is time to leave this bad old world behind."

But it seems Feet Samuels does not go to pay his landlady right away. Where he goes is to Johnny Crackow's crap game downtown, which is a crap game with a \$500 limit where the high shots seldom go, but where there is always some action for a small operator. And as Feet walks into the joint it seems that Big Nig is trying to make four with the dice, and everybody knows that four is a hard point for Big Nig, or anybody else, to make.

So Feet Samuels looks on awhile watching Big Nig trying to make four, and a guy by the name of Whitey offers to take two to one for a C note that Big Nig makes this four, which is certainly more confidence than I will ever have in Big Nig. Naturally Feet hauls out a couple of his C notes at once, as anybody must do who has a couple of C notes, and bets Whitey two hundred to a hundred that Big Nig does not make the four. And right away Big Nig outs with a seven, so Feet wins the bet.

Well, to make a long story short, Feet stands there for some time betting guys that other guys will not make four, or whatever it is they are trying to make with the dice, and the first thing anybody knows Feet Samuels is six G's winner, and has the crap game all crippled up. I see him the next night up in the Hot Box, and this big first baseman, Hortense, is with him, sliding around on

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Feet's feet, and a blind man can see that she has on at least three more diamond bracelets than ever before.

A night or two later I hear of Feet beating Long George McCormack, a high shot from Los Angeles, out of eighteen G's playing a card game that is called low ball, and Feet Samuels has no more license to beat a guy like Long George playing low ball than I have to lick Jack Dempsey. But when a guy finally gets his rushes in gambling nothing can stop him for a while, and this is the way it is with Feet. Every night you hear of him winning plenty of dough at this or that.

He comes into Mindy's one morning, and naturally I move over to his table at once, because Feet is now in the money and is a guy anybody can associate with freely. I am just about to ask him how things are going with him, although I know they are going pretty good, when in pops a fierce-looking old guy with his face all covered with gray whiskers that stick out every which way, and whose eyes peek out of these whiskers very wild indeed. Feet turns pale as he sees the guy, but nods at him, and the guy nods back and goes out.

"Who is the Whiskers?" I ask Feet. "He is in here the other morning looking around, and he makes people very nervous because nobody can figure who he is or what his dodge may be."

"It is old Doc Bodecker," Feet says. "He is around checking up on me to make sure I am still in town. Say, I am in a very hot spot one way and another."

"What are you worrying about?" I ask. "You got

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plenty of dough and about two weeks left to enjoy yourself before this Doc Bodeeker forecloses on you."

"I know," Feet says, very sad. "But now I get this dough things do not look as tough to me as formerly, and I am very sorry I make the deal with the doctor. Especially," Feet says, "on account of Hortense."

"What about Hortense?" I ask.

"I think she is commencing to love me since I am able to buy her more diamond bracelets than the other guy," Feet says. "If it is not for this thing hanging over me, I will ask her to marry me, and maybe she will do it, at that."

"Well, then," I say, "why do you not go to old Whiskers and pay him his dough back, and tell him you change your mind about selling your body, although of course if it is not for Whiskers' buying your body you will not have all this dough."

"I do go to him," Feet says, and I can see there are big tears in his eyes. "But he says he will not cancel the deal. He says he will not take the money back; what he wants is my body, because I have such a funny-shaped head. I offer him four times what he pays me, but he will not take it. He says my body must be delivered to him promptly on March first."

"Does Hortense know about this deal?" I ask.

"Oh, no, no!" Feet says. "And I will never tell her, because she will think I am crazy, and Hortense does not care for crazy guys. In fact, she is always complaining about the other guy who buys her the diamond bracelets, claiming he is a little crazy, and if she thinks I am

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the same way the chances are she will give me the breeze."

Now this is a situation, indeed, but what to do about it I do not know. I put the proposition up to a lawyer friend of mine the next day, and he says he does not believe the deal will hold good in court, but of course I know Feet Samuels does not wish to go to court, because the last time Feet goes to court he is held as a material witness and is in the Tombs ten days.

The lawyer says Feet can run away, but personally I consider this a very dishonorable idea after The Brain putting the okay on Feet with old Doc Bodecker, and anyway I can see Feet is not going to do such a thing as long as Hortense is around. I can see that one hair of her head is stronger than the Atlantic cable with Feet Samuels.

A week slides by, and I do not see so much of Feet, but I hear of him murdering crap games and short card players, and winning plenty, and also going around the night clubs with Hortense who finally has so many bracelets there is no more room on her arms, and she puts a few of them on her ankles, which are not bad ankles to look at, at that, with or without bracelets.

Then goes another week, and it just happens I am standing in front of Mindy's about four-thirty one morning and thinking that Feet's time must be up and wondering how he makes out with old Doc Bodecker, when all of a sudden I hear a ploppity-plop coming up Broadway, and what do I see but Feet Samuels running so fast he is passing taxis that are going thirty-five miles

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an hour like they are standing still. He is certainly stepping along.

There are no traffic lights and not much traffic at such an hour in the morning, and Feet passes me in a terrible hurry. And about twenty yards behind him comes an old guy with gray whiskers and I can see it is nobody but Doc Bodeeker. What is more, he has a big long knife in one hand, and he seems to be reaching for Feet at every jump with the knife.

Well, this seems to me a most surprising spectacle, and I follow them to see what comes of it, because I can see at once that Doc Bodeeker is trying to collect Feet's body himself. But I am not much of a runner, and they are out of my sight in no time, and only that I am able to follow them by ear through Feet's feet going ploppity-plop I will never trail them.

They turn east into Fifty-fourth Street off Broadway, and when I finally reach the corner I see a crowd halfway down the block in front of the Hot Box, and I know this crowd has something to do with Feet and Doc Bodeeker even before I get to the door to find that Feet goes on in while Doc Bodeeker is arguing with Soldier Sweeney, the door man, because as Feet passes the Soldier he tells the Soldier not to let the guy who is chasing him in. And the Soldier, being a good friend of Feet's, is standing the doc off.

Well, it seems that Hortense is in the Hot Box waiting for Feet, and naturally she is much surprised to see him come in all out of breath, and so is everybody else in the joint, including Henri, the head waiter, who

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afterwards tells me what comes off there, because you see I am out in front.

"A crazy man is chasing me with a butcher knife," Feet says to Hortense. "If he gets inside I am a goner. He is down at the door trying to get in."

Now I will say one thing for Hortense, and this is she has plenty of nerve, but of course you will expect a daughter of Skush O'Brien to have plenty of nerve. Nobody ever has more moxie than Skush. Henri, the head waiter, tells me that Hortense does not get excited, but says she will just have a little peek at the guy who is chasing Feet.

The Hot Box is over a garage, and the kitchen windows look down into Fifty-fourth Street, and while Doc Bodecker is arguing with Soldier Sweeney, I hear a window lift, and who looks out but Hortense. She takes one squint and yanks her head in quick, and Henri tells me afterwards she shrieks:

"My Lord, Feet! This is the same daffy old guy who sends me all the bracelets, and who wishes to marry me!"

"And he is the guy I sell my body to," Feet says, and then he tells Hortense the story of his deal with Doc Bodecker.

"It is all for you, Horthy," Feet says, although of course this is nothing but a big lie, because it is all for The Brain in the beginning. "I love you, and I only wish to get a little dough to show you a good time before I die. If it is not for this deal I will ask you to be my ever-loving wife."

Well, what happens but Hortense plunges right into

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Feet's arms, and gives him a big kiss on his ugly smush, and says to him like this:

"I love you too, Feet, because nobody ever makes such a sacrifice as to hock their body for me. Never mind the deal. I will marry you at once, only we must first get rid of this daffy old guy downstairs."

Then Hortense peeks out of the window again and hollers down at old Doc Bodecker. "Go away," she says. "Go away, or I will chuck a moth in your whiskers, you old fool."

But the sight of her only seems to make old Doc Bodecker a little wilder than somewhat, and he starts struggling with Soldier Sweeney very ferocious, so the Soldier takes the knife away from the doc and throws it away before somebody gets hurt with it.

Now it seems Hortense looks around the kitchen for something to chuck out the window at old Doc Bodecker, and all she sees is a nice new ham which the chef just lays out on the table to slice up for ham sandwiches. This ham is a very large ham, such as will last the Hot Box a month, for they slice the ham in their ham sandwiches very, very thin up at the Hot Box. Anyway, Hortense grabs up the ham and runs to the window with it and gives it a heave without even stopping to take aim.

Well, this ham hits poor old Doc Bodecker ker-bowie smack dab on the noggin. The doc does not fall down, but he commences staggering around with his legs bending under him like he is drunk.

I wish to help him because I feel sorry for a guy in such a spot as this, and what is more I consider it a dirty

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trick for a doll such as Hortense to slug anybody with a ham.

Well, I take charge of the old doc and lead him back down Broadway and into Mindy's, where I set him down and get him a cup of coffee and a Bismarck herring to revive him, while quite a number of citizens gather about him very sympathetic.

"My friends," the old doc says finally, looking around, "you see in me a broken-hearted man. I am not a crackpot, although of course my relatives may give you an argument on this proposition. I am in love with Hortense. I am in love with her from the night I first see her playing the part of a sunflower in 'Scandals.' I wish to marry her, as I am a widower of long standing, but somehow the idea of me marrying anybody never appeals to my sons and daughters.

"In fact," the doc says, dropping his voice to a whisper, "sometimes they even talk of locking me up when I wish to marry somebody. So naturally I never tell them about Hortense, because I fear they may try to discourage me. But I am deeply in love with her and send her many beautiful presents, although I am not able to see her often on account of my relatives. Then I find out Hortense is carrying on with this Feet Samuels.

"I am desperately jealous," the doc says, "but I do not know what to do. Finally Fate sends this Feet to me offering to sell his body. Of course I am not practicing for years, but I keep an office on Park Avenue just for old times' sake, and it is to this office he comes. At first I think he is crazy, but he refers me to Mr. Armand

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Rosenthal, the big sporting man, who assures me that Feet Samuels is all right.

"The idea strikes me that if I make a deal with Feet Samuels for his body as he proposes, he will wait until the time comes to pay his obligation and run away, and," the doc says, "I will never be troubled by his rivalry for the affections of Hortense again. But he does not depart. I do not reckon on the holding power of love.

"Finally in a jealous frenzy I take after him with a knife, figuring to scare him out of town. But it is too late. I can see now Hortense loves him in return, or she will not drop a scuttle of coal on me in his defense as she does.

"Yes, gentlemen," the old doc says, "I am broken-hearted. I also seem to have a large lump on my head. Besides, Hortense has all my presents, and Feet Samuels has my money, so I get the worst of it all around. I only hope and trust that my daughter Eloise, who is Mrs. Sidney Simmons Bragdon, does not hear of this or she may be as mad as she is the time I wish to marry the beautiful cigaret girl in Jimmy Kelley's."

Here Doc Bodecker seems all busted up by his feelings and starts to shed tears, and everybody is feeling very sorry for him indeed, when up steps The Brain who is taking everything in.

"Do not worry about your presents and your dough," The Brain says. "I will make everything good, because I am the guy who okays Feet Samuels with you. I am wrong on a guy for the first time in my life, and I must pay, but Feet Samuels will be very, very, very sorry when

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I find him. Of course I do not figure on a doll in the case, and this always makes quite a difference, so I am really not a hundred percent wrong on the guy, at that.

"But," The Brain says, in a very loud voice so everybody can hear, "Feet Samuels is nothing but a dirty welsher for not turning in his body to you as per agreement, and as long as he lives he will never get another dollar or another okay off of me, or anybody I know. His credit is ruined forever on Broadway."

But I judge that Feet and Hortense do not care. The last time I hear of them they are away over in New Jersey where not even The Brain's guys dast to bother them on account of Skush O'Brien, and I understand they are raising chickens and children right and left, and that all of Hortense's bracelets are now in Newark municipal bonds, which I am told are not bad bonds, at that.



The Song of Songs

By P. G. Wodehouse



NOTHER day dawned all hot and fresh and, in pursuance of my unswerving policy at that time, I was singing "Sonny Boy" in my bath, when Jeeves' voice filtered through the woodwork.

"I beg your pardon, sir."

I had just got to that bit about the angels being lonely, where you need every ounce of concentration in order to make the spectacular finish, but I signed off courteously.

"Yes, Jeeves? Say on."

"Mr. Glossop, sir."

"What about him?"

"He is in the sitting room, sir."

"Young Tuppy Glossop?"

"Yes, sir."

"You say that he is in the sitting room?"

"Yes, sir."

"Desiring speech with me?"

"Yes, sir."

"H'm!"

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"Sir?"

"I only said 'H'm.' "

And I'll tell you why I said "H'm." It was because the man's story had interested me strangely. And I'll tell you why the man's story had interested me strangely. Owing to a certain episode that had occurred one night at the Drones' Club, there had sprung up recently a coolness, as you might describe it, between this Glossop and myself. The news, therefore, that he was visiting me at my flat, especially at an hour when he must have known that I would be in my bath and consequently in a strong strategic position to heave a wet sponge at him, surprised me considerably.

I hopped out with some briskness and, slipping a couple of towels about the torso, made for the sitting room. I found young Tuppy at the piano, playing "Sonny Boy" with one finger.

"What ho!" I said, not without hauteur.

"Oh, hullo, Bertie," said Tuppy. "I say, Bertie, I want to see you about something important."

It seemed to me that the bloke was embarrassed. He had moved to the mantelpiece, and now he broke a vase in a constrained way.

"The fact is, Bertie, I'm engaged."

"Engaged?"

"Engaged," said young Tuppy, coyly dropping a photograph frame upon the fender. "Practically, that is."

"Practically?"

"Yes. You'll like her, Bertie. Her name is

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Cora Bellinger. She's studying for opera. Wonderful voice. Also dark, flashing eyes and a great soul."

"How do you mean, practically?"

"Well, it's this way. Before ordering the trousseau, there is one little point she wants cleared up. You see, what with her great soul and all that, she has a rather serious outlook on life, and the one thing she absolutely bars is anything in the shape of hearty humor. You know, practical joking and so forth.

"She said if she thought I was a practical joker she would never speak to me again. And unfortunately she appears to have heard about that little affair at the Drones' . . . I expect you have forgotten all about that, Bertie?"

"I have not!"

"No, no, not forgotten exactly. What I mean is, nobody laughs more heartily at the recollection than you. And what I want you to do, old man, is to seize an early opportunity of taking Cora aside and categorically denying that there is any truth in the story. My happiness, Bertie, is in your hands, if you know what I mean."

Well, of course, if he put it like that, what could I do? We Woosters have our code.

"Oh, all right," I said, but far from brightly.

"Splendid fellow!"

"When do I meet this blighted female?" I asked.

"Don't call her 'this blighted female,' Bertie, old man. I have planned all that out. I will bring her around here today for a spot of lunch."

"What!"

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"At one-thirty. Right. Good. Fine. Thanks. I knew I could rely on you."

He pushed off, and I turned to Jeeves, who had shimmered in with the morning meal.

"Lunch for three today, Jeeves," I said.

"Very good, sir."

"You know, Jeeves, it's a bit thick. You remember my telling you about what Mr. Glossop did to me that night at the Drones'?"

"Yes, sir."

"For months I have been cherishing dreams of a hideous vengeance. And now, so far from crushing him into the dust, I've got to fill him and fiancée with rich food and generally rally round and be the good angel."

"Life is like that, sir."

"True, Jeeves. What have we here?" I asked, inspecting the tray.

"Kipperred herrings, sir."

"And I shouldn't wonder," I said, for I was in thoughtful mood, "if even herrings haven't troubles of their own."

"Quite possibly, sir."

"I mean, apart from getting kippered."

"Yes, sir."

"And so it goes on, Jeeves, so it goes on."

I can't say I saw exactly eye to eye with young Tuppy in his admiration for the Bellinger female. Delivered on the mat at one-twenty-five, she proved to be an upstanding light-heavyweight of some thirty summers with a

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commanding eye and a square chin which I, personally, would have steered clear of.

She seemed to me a good deal like what Cleopatra would have been after going in too freely for the starches and cereals. I don't know why it is, but women who have anything to do with opera, even if they're only studying for it, always appear to run to surplus poundage.

Tuppy, however, was obviously all for her. His whole demeanor, both before and during luncheon, was that of one striving to be worthy of a noble soul. When Jeeves offered him a cocktail, he practically recoiled as from a serpent. It was terrible to see the change which love had effected in the man. The spectacle put me off my food.

At half past two, the Bellinger left to go to a singing lesson. Tuppy trotted after her to the door, bleating and frisking a goodish bit, and then came back and looked at me in a marked manner.

"Well, Bertie?"

"Well, what?"

"I mean, isn't she?"

"Oh, rather," I said, humoring the poor fish.

"Wonderful eyes?"

"Oh, rather."

"Wonderful figure?"

"Oh, quite."

"Wonderful voice?"

Here I was able to intone the response with a little more heartiness. The Bellinger, at Tuppy's request, had

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sung us a few songs before digging in at the trough, and nobody could have denied that her pipes were in great shape. The plaster was still falling from the ceiling.

"Terrific," I said.

Tuppy sighed, and, having helped himself to about four inches of whisky and one of soda, took a deep, refreshing draft.

"Ah!" he said. "I needed that."

"Why didn't you have it at lunch?"

"Well, it's this way," said Tuppy. "I have not actually ascertained what Cora's opinions are on the subject of the taking of slight snorts from time to time, but I thought it more prudent to lay off. The view I took was that laying off would seem to indicate the serious mind. It is touch and go, as you might say, at the moment, and the smallest thing may turn the scale."

"What beats me is how on earth you expect to make her think you've got a mind at all—let alone a serious one."

"Well, I have my methods."

"I bet they're rotten."

"You do, do you?" said Tuppy warmly. "Well, let me tell you, my lad, that that's exactly what they're anything but. I am handling this affair with consummate generalship. Do you remember Beefy Bingham who was at Oxford with us?"

"I ran into him only the other day. He's a parson now."

"Yes. Down in the East End. Well, he runs a lads'

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club for the local toughs—you know the sort of thing—cocoa and backgammon in the reading room and occasional clean, bright entertainments in the Oddfellows' Hall; and I've been helping him. I don't suppose I've passed an evening away from the backgammon board for weeks. Cora is extremely pleased. I've got her to promise to sing on Tuesday at Beefy's next clean, bright entertainment."

"You have?"

"I absolutely have. And now mark my devilish ingenuity, Bertie. I'm going to sing, too."

"Why do you suppose that's going to get you anywhere?"

"Because the way I intend to sing the song I intend to sing will prove to her that there are great depths in my nature, whose existence she has not suspected. She will see that rough, unlettered audience wiping the tears out of its bally eyes and she will say to herself, 'What ho! The old egg really has a soul!'

"For it is not one of your moldy comic songs, Bertie. No low buffoonery of that sort for me. It is all about angels being lonely and what not."

I uttered a sharp cry. "You can't mean you're going to sing 'Sonny Boy'?"

"I jolly well do."

I was shocked. Yes, dash it, I was shocked. You see, I held strong views on "Sonny Boy." I considered it a song only to be attempted by a few of the elect in the privacy of the bathroom. And the thought of it being

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murdered in open Oddfellows' Hall by a bloke who could treat a pal as young Tuppy had treated me that night at the Drones', sickened me. Yes, sickened me.

I hadn't time, however, to express my horror and disgust, for at this juncture Jeeves came in.

"Mrs. Travers has just rung up on the telephone, sir. She desired me to say that she will be calling to see you in a few minutes."

"Contents noted, Jeeves," I said. "Now listen, Tuppy——" I began.

I stopped. The fellow wasn't there.

"Mr. Glossop has left, sir,"

"Left? How can he have left? He was sitting there."

"That is the front door closing now, sir."

"But what made him shoot off like that?"

"Possibly Mr. Glossop did not wish to meet Mrs. Travers, sir."

"Why not?"

"I could not say, sir. But undoubtedly at the mention of Mrs. Travers' name he rose very swiftly."

"Strange, Jeeves."

"Yes, sir."

I turned to a subject of more moment.

"Jeeves," I said, "Mr. Glossop proposes to sing 'Sonny Boy' at an entertainment down in the East End next Tuesday before an audience consisting mainly of costermongers, with a sprinkling of whelk-stall owners, purveyors of blood oranges and minor pugilists."

"Indeed, sir?"

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"Make a note to remind me to be there. He will infallibly get the bird, and I want to witness his downfall."

"Very good, sir."

"And when Mrs. Travers arrives, I shall be in the sitting room."

Those who know Bertram Wooster best are aware that in his journey through life he is impeded and generally snookered by about as scaly a collection of aunts as was ever assembled. But there is one exception to the general ghastliness—viz., my aunt Dahlia. She married old Tom Travers the year Bluebottle won the Cambridgeshire, and is one of the best. It is always a pleasure to me to chat with her, and it was with a courtly geniality that I rose to receive her as she sailed over the threshold at about two-fifty-five.

She seemed somewhat perturbed, and plunged into the agenda without delay. Aunt Dahlia is one of those big, hearty women. She used to go in a lot for hunting, and she generally speaks as if she had just sighted a fox on a hillside half a mile away.

"Bertie," she cried, in the manner of one encouraging a platoon of hounds to renewed efforts, "I want your help."

"And you shall have it, Aunt Dahlia," I replied suavely. "I can honestly say that there is no one to whom I would more readily do a good turn, no one to whom I am more delighted to be——"

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"Less of it," she begged; "less of it. You know that friend of yours, young Glossop?"

"He's just been lunching here."

"He has, has he? Well, I wish you'd poisoned his soup."

"We didn't have soup. And when you describe him as a friend of mine, I wouldn't quite say the term absolutely squared with the facts. Some time ago, one night when we had been dining together at the Drones'——"

At this point Aunt Dahlia—a little brusquely, it seemed to me—said that she would rather wait for the story of my life till she could get it in book form. I could see now that she was definitely not her usual sunny self, so I shelved my personal grievances and asked what was biting her.

"It's that young hound Glossop," she said.

"What's he been doing?"

"Breaking Angela's heart."

(Angela. Daughter of above. My cousin. Quite a good egg.)

"What!"

"I say he's—breaking—Angela's—*heart!*"

"You say he's breaking Angela's heart?"

She begged me to suspend the vaudeville cross-talk stuff.

"How's he doing that?" I asked.

"With his neglect. With his low, callous, double-crossing duplicity."

"Duplicity is the word, Aunt Dahlia," I said. "In treating of young Tuppy Glossop, it springs naturally

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to the lips. Let me tell you what he did to me one night at the Drones'. We had finished dinner——"

"Ever since the beginning of the season, up to about three weeks ago, he was all over Angela. The sort of thing which, when I was a girl, we should have described as courting."

"Or wooing?"

"Wooing or courting, whichever you like."

"Whichever *you* like, Aunt Dahlia," I said courteously.

"Well, anyway, he haunted the house, lapped up daily lunches, took her out dancing half the night, and so on, till naturally the poor kid, who's quite off her oats about him, took it for granted that it was only a question of time before he suggested that they should feed for life out of the same crib. And now he's gone and dropped her like a hot brick, and I hear he's infatuated with some girl he met at a Chelsea tea party—a girl named—now, what was it?"

"Cora Bellinger."

"How do you know?"

"She was lunching here today."

"He brought her?"

"Yes."

"What's she like?"

"Pretty massive. In shape, a bit on the lines of the Albert Hall."

"Did he seem very fond of her?"

"Couldn't take his eyes off the chassis."

"The modern young man," said Aunt Dahlia, "is a

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pot of poison and wants a nurse to lead him by the hand and some strong attendant to kick him regularly at intervals of a quarter of an hour."

I tried to point out the silver lining.

"If you ask me, Aunt Dahlia," I said, "I think Angela is well out of it. This Glossop is a tough baby. One of London's toughest. I was trying to tell you just now what he did to me one night at the Drones'.

"First, having got me in sporting mood with a bottle of the ripest, he bet me that I wouldn't swing myself across the swimming pool by the ropes and rings. I knew I could do it on my head, so I took him on, exulting in the fun, so to speak. And when I'd done half the trip and was going strong, I found he had looped the last rope back against the rail, leaving me no alternative but to drop into the depths and swim ashore in correct evening costume."

"He did?"

"He certainly did. It was months ago, and I haven't got really dry yet. You wouldn't want your daughter to marry a man capable of a thing like that!"

"On the contrary, you restore my faith in the young hound. I see that there must be lots of good in him, after all. And I want this Bellinger business broken up, Bertie."

"How?"

"I don't care how. Any way you please."

"But what can I do?"

"Do? Why, put the whole thing before your man Jeeves. Jeeves will find a way. One of the most capable

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fellers I ever met. Put the thing squarely up to Jeeves and let Nature take its course."

"There may be something in what you say, Aunt Dahlia," I said thoughtfully.

"Of course there is," said Aunt Dahlia. "A little thing like this will be child's play to Jeeves. Get him working on it, and I'll look in tomorrow to hear the result."

With which, she biffed off, and I summoned Jeeves to the presence.

"Jeeves," I said, "you have heard all?"

"Yes, sir."

"I thought you would. Aunt Dahlia has what you might call a carrying voice. Has it ever occurred to you that, if all other sources of income failed, she could make a good living calling the cattle home across the sands of Dee?"

"I had not considered the point, sir, but no doubt you are right."

"Well, how do we go? What is your reaction? I think we should do our best to help and assist."

"Yes, sir."

"I am fond of Aunt Dahlia and I am fond of Angela. Fond of them both, if you get my drift. What the misguided girl finds to attract her in young Tuppy, I cannot say, Jeeves, and you cannot say. But apparently she loves the man—which shows it can be done, a thing I wouldn't have believed myself—and is pining away like——"

"Patience on a monument, sir."

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"Like Patience, as you very shrewdly remark, on a monument. So we must cluster round. Bend your brain to the problem, Jeeves. It is one that will tax you to the uttermost."

Aunt Dahlia blew in on the morrow, and I rang the bell for Jeeves. He appeared, looking brainier than one could have believed possible—sheer intellect shining from every feature—and I could see at once that the engine had been turning over.

"Speak, Jeeves," I said.

"Very good, sir."

"You have brooded?"

"Yes, sir."

"With what success?"

"I have a plan, sir, which I fancy may produce satisfactory results."

"Let's have it," said Aunt Dahlia.

"In affairs of this description, madam, the first essential is to study the psychology of the individual."

"The what?"

"The psychology, madam."

"He means the psychology," I said.

"Oh, ah," said Aunt Dahlia.

"And by psychology, Jeeves," I went on, to help the thing along, "you simply——?"

"The natures and dispositions of the principals in the matter, sir."

"You mean, what they're like?"

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"Precisely, sir."

"Does he talk like this when you're alone, Bertie?" asked Aunt Dahlia.

"Sometimes. Occasionally. And on the other hand, sometimes not. Proceed, Jeeves."

"Well, sir, if I may say so, the thing that struck me most forcibly about Miss Bellinger when she was under my observation was that hers was a somewhat imperious nature. I could envisage Miss Bellinger applauding success. I could not so easily see her pitying and sympathizing with failure.

"Possibly you will recall, sir, her attitude when Mr. Glossop endeavored to light her cigaret with his automatic lighter? I thought I detected a certain impatience at his inability to produce the necessary flame."

"True, Jeeves. She ticked him off."

"Precisely, sir."

"Let me get this straight," said Aunt Dahlia. "You think if he goes on trying to light her cigaret with his automatic lighter long enough, she will eventually get fed up and hand him the mitten?"

"I merely mentioned the episode, madam, as an indication of Miss Bellinger's somewhat ruthless nature."

"Ruthless," I said, "is right. The Bellinger is hard-boiled. Those eyes. That chin. I could read them. A vicious specimen, if ever there was one."

"Precisely, sir. I think, therefore, that, should Miss Bellinger be a witness of Mr. Glossop's appearing to disadvantage in public, she would cease to entertain affection for him. In the event, for instance, of his fail-

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ing to entertain the audience on Tuesday with his singing——”

I saw daylight.

“By Jove, Jeeves! You mean if he gets the bird, all will be off?”

“I shall be greatly surprised if such is not the case, sir.”

I shook my head.

“We cannot leave this thing to chance, Jeeves. Young Tuppy, singing ‘Sonny Boy’, is the likeliest prospect for the bird that I can think of—but no . . . You see for yourself that we must do more than simply trust to luck.”

“We need not trust to luck, sir. I would suggest that you approach your friend Mr. Bingham and volunteer your services at his forthcoming entertainment. It could readily be arranged to have you sing immediately before Mr. Glossop. I fancy, sir, that if Mr. Glossop were to sing ‘Sonny Boy’ directly after you had sung ‘Sonny Boy,’ the audience would respond satisfactorily. By the time Mr. Glossop began to sing, they would have lost their taste for that particular song and would express their feelings warmly.”

“Jeeves,” said Aunt Dahlia, “you’re a marvel!”

“Thank you, madam.”

“Jeeves,” I said, “you’re an ass!”

“What do you mean, he’s an ass?” said Aunt Dahlia hotly. “I think it’s the greatest scheme I ever heard.”

“Me sing ‘Sonny Boy’ at Beefy Bingham’s clean, bright entertainment? I can see myself!”

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"You sing it daily in your bath, sir. Mr. Wooster," said Jeeves, turning to Aunt Dahlia, "has a pleasant, light barytone."

"I bet he has," said Aunt Dahlia.

I checked the man with one of my looks.

"Between singing 'Sonny Boy' in one's bath, Jeeves, and singing it before a hall full of assorted blood-orange merchants and their young, there is a substantial difference."

"Bertie," said Aunt Dahlia, "you'll sing, and like it!"

"I will not."

"Bertie!"

"Nothing will induce——"

"Bertie," said Aunt Dahlia firmly, "you will sing 'Sonny Boy' on Tuesday, the third *prox.*, or may an aunt's curse——"

"I won't!"

"Think of Angela!"

"Dash Angela!"

"Bertie!"

"No, I mean, hang it all!"

"You won't?"

"No, I won't."

"That is your last word, is it?"

"It is. Once and for all, Aunt Dahlia, nothing will induce me to let out so much as a single note."

And so that afternoon I sent a prepaid wire to Beefy Bingham, offering my services in the cause, and by night-fall the thing was fixed up. I was billed to perform next but one after the intermission. Following me,

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came Tuppy. And immediately after him, Miss Cora Bellinger, the well-known operatic soprano.

How these things happen, I couldn't say. The chivalry of the Woosters, I suppose.

"Jeeves," I said that evening, and I said it coldly, "I shall be glad if you will pop round to the nearest music shop and procure me a copy of 'Sonny Boy.' It will now be necessary for me to learn both verse and refrain. Of the trouble and nervous strain which this will involve, I say nothing."

"Very good, sir."

"But this I do say——"

"I had better be starting immediately, sir, or the shop will be closed."

"Ha!" I said.

And I meant it to sting.

Although I had steeled myself to the ordeal before me and had set out full of the calm, quiet courage which makes men do desperate deeds with proud, set faces, I must admit that there was a moment, just after I had entered the Oddfellows' Hall at Bermondsey East and run an eye over the assembled pleasure seekers, when it needed all the bulldog pluck of the Woosters to keep me from calling it a day and taking a cab back to civilization.

The clean, bright entertainment was in full swing when I arrived, and somebody who looked as if he might be the local undertaker was reciting "Gunga Din." And the audience, though not actually chiyiking in the full

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technical sense of the term, had a grim look which I didn't like at all.

As I scanned the multitude, it seemed to me that they were for the nonce suspending judgment. Did you ever tap on the door of one of those New York speak-easy places and see the grille snap back and a Face appear? There is one long, silent moment when its eyes are fixed on yours and all your past life seems to rise up before you. Then you say that you are a friend of Mr. Zinzinheimer and he told you they would treat you right if you mentioned his name, and the strain relaxes.

Well, these costermongers and wheel-stallers appeared to me to be looking just like that Face. Start something, they seemed to say, and they would know what to do about it. And I couldn't help feeling that my singing "Sonny Boy" would come, in their opinion, under the head of starting something.

"A nice, full house, sir," said a voice at my elbow.

It was Jeeves, watching the proceedings with an indulgent eye.

"You here, Jeeves?" I said coldly.

"Yes, sir. I have been present since the commencement."

"Oh?" I said. "Any casualties yet?"

"Sir?"

"You know what I mean, Jeeves," I said sternly, "and don't pretend you don't. Anybody got the bird yet?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"I shall be the first, you think?"

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"No, sir, I see no reason to expect such a misfortune. I anticipate that you will be well received."

A sudden thought struck me. "And you think everything will go according to plan?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I don't," I said. "I've spotted a flaw in your beastly scheme."

"A flaw, sir?"

"Yes. Do you suppose for a moment that when Mr. Glossop hears me singing that dashed song, he'll come calmly on a minute after me and sing it, too? Use your intelligence, Jeeves. He will perceive the chasm in his path and pause in time. He will back out and refuse to go on at all."

"Mr. Glossop will not hear you sing, sir. At my advice, he has stepped across the road to the Jug and Bottle, an establishment immediately opposite the hall, and he intends to remain there until it is time for him to appear on the platform."

"Oh!" I said.

"If I might suggest it, sir, there is another house named the Goat and Grapes only a short distance down the street. I think it might be a judicious move——"

"If I were to put a bit of custom in their way?"

"It would ease the nervous strain of waiting, sir."

I had not been feeling any too pleased with the man for having let me in for this ghastly binge, but at these words, I'm bound to say my austerity softened a trifle. He was undoubtedly right.

He had studied the psychology of the individual, if

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you see what I mean, and it had not led him astray. A quiet ten minutes at the Goat and Grapes was exactly what my system required. To buzz off there and inhale a couple of swift whisky-and-sodas was with Bertram Wooster the work of a moment.

The treatment worked like magic. What they had put into the stuff, besides vitriol, I could not have said; but it completely altered my outlook on life. That curious, gulpy feeling passed. I was no longer conscious of the sagging sensation at the knees. The limbs ceased to quiver gently, the tongue became loosened in its socket, and the backbone stiffened.

Pausing merely to order and swallow another of the same, I bade the barmaid a cheery good night, nodded affably to one or two fellows in the bar whose faces I liked, and came prancing back to the hall, ready for anything.

And shortly afterwards I was on the platform with about a million bulging eyes goggling up at me. There was a rummy sort of buzzing in my ears, and then through the buzzing I heard the sound of a piano starting to tinkle; and, commending my soul to God, I took a good long breath and charged in.

Well, it was a close thing. If ever my grandchildren cluster about my knee and want to know what I did in the Great War, I shall say, "Never mind about the Great War. Ask me about the time I sang 'Sonny Boy' at the Oddfellows' Hall at Bermondsey East."

The whole incident is a bit blurred, but I seem to recol-

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lect a kind of murmur as I hit the refrain. I thought at the time it was an attempt on the part of the many-headed to join in the chorus, and at the moment it rather encouraged me.

I passed the thing over the larynx with all the vim at my disposal, hit the high note, and off gracefully into the wings. I didn't come on again to take a bow. I just receded and oiled round to where Jeeves awaited me among the standees at the back.

"Well, Jeeves," I said, anchoring myself at his side and brushing the honest perspiration from the brow. "They didn't rush the platform."

"No, sir."

"But you can spread it about that that's the last time I perform outside my bath. My swan song, Jeeves. Anybody who wants to hear me in future must present himself at the bathroom door and shove his ear against the keyhole. I may be wrong, but it seemed to me that towards the end they were hotting up a trifle. The bird was hovering in the air. I could hear the beating of its wings."

"I did detect a certain restlessness, sir, in the audience. I fancy they had lost their taste for that particular melody. I should have informed you earlier, sir, that the song had already been sung twice before you arrived."

"What!"

"Yes, sir. Once by a lady and once by a gentleman. It is a very popular song, sir."

I gaped at the man. That, with this knowledge, he could calmly have allowed the young master to step

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straight into the jaws of death, so to speak, paralyzed me. It seemed to show that the old feudal spirit had passed away altogether. I was about to give him my views on the matter in no uncertain fashion, when I was stopped by the spectacle of young Tuppy lurching onto the platform.

Young Tuppy had the unmistakable air of a man who has recently been round to the Jug and Bottle. A few cheery cries of welcome, presumably from some of his backgammon-playing pals who felt that blood was thicker than water, had the effect of causing the genial smile on his face to widen till it nearly met at the back.

He was plainly feeling about as good as a man can feel and still remain on his feet. He waved a kindly hand to his supporters and bowed in a regal sort of manner, like an eastern monarch acknowledging the plaudits of the mob.

Then the female at the piano struck up the opening bars of "Sonny Boy," and Tuppy swelled like a balloon, clasped his hands together, rolled his eyes up at the ceiling in a manner denoting Soul, and began.

I think the populace was too stunned for the moment to take immediate steps. It may seem incredible, but I give you my word that young Tuppy got right through the verse without so much as a murmur. Then they seemed to pull themselves together.

A costermonger, roused, is a terrible thing. I had never seen the proletariat really stirred before, and I'm bound to say it rather awed me. I mean, it gave you some idea

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of what it must have been like during the French Revolution.

From every corner of the hall there proceeded simultaneously the sort of noise you hear at one of those East End boxing places when the referee disqualifies the popular favorite and makes the quick dash for life. And then they passed beyond mere words and began to introduce the vegetable motif.

I don't know why, but somehow I had got it into my head that the first thing thrown at Tuppy would be a potato. One gets these fancies. It was, however, as a matter of fact, a banana, and I saw in an instant that the choice had been made by wiser heads than mine. These blokes who have grown up from childhood in the knowledge of how to treat a dramatic entertainment that doesn't please them are aware by a sort of instinct just what to do for the best, and the moment I saw that banana splash on Tuppy's shirt front I realized how infinitely more effective and artistic it was than any potato could have been.

Not that the potato school of thought had not also its supporters. As the proceedings warmed up, I noticed several intelligent-looking fellows who threw nothing else.

The effect on young Tuppy was rather remarkable. His eyes bulged and his hair seemed to stand up, and yet his mouth went on opening and shutting, and you could see that in a dazed, automatic way he was still singing "Sonny Boy."

Then, coming out of his trance, he began to pull for

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the shore with some rapidity. The last seen of him, he was beating a tomato to the exit by a short head.

Presently the tumult and the shouting died. I turned to Jeeves.

"Painful, Jeeves," I said. "But what would you?"

"Yes, sir."

"The surgeon's knife, what?"

"Precisely, sir."

"Well, with this happening beneath her eyes, I think we may definitely consider the Glossop-Bellinger romance off."

"Yes, sir."

At this point old Beefy Bingham came out upon the platform.

I supposed that he was about to rebuke his flock for the recent expression of feeling. But such was not the case. No doubt he was accustomed by now to the wholesome give-and-take of these clean, bright entertainments and had ceased to think it worth while to make any comment when there was a certain liveliness.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said old Beefy. "The next item on the program was to have been songs by Miss Cora Bellinger, the well-known operatic soprano. I have just received a telephone message from Miss Bellinger, saying that her car has broken down. She is, however, on her way here in a cab and will arrive shortly. Meanwhile, our friend Mr. Enoch Simpson will recite 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.'"

I clutched at Jeeves. "Jeeves! You heard?"

"Yes, sir."

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"She wasn't here!"

"No, sir."

"She saw nothing of Tuppy's Waterloo."

"No, sir."

"The whole bally scheme has blown a fuse."

"Yes, sir."

"Come, Jeeves," I said, and those standing by wondered, no doubt, what had caused that clean-cut face to grow so pale and set. "I have been subjected to a nervous strain unparalleled since the days of the early martyrs. I have lost pounds in weight and permanently injured my entire system. I have gone through an ordeal which will make me wake up screaming in the night for months to come. And all for nothing. Let us go."

"If you have no objection, sir, I would like to witness the remainder of the entertainment."

"Suit yourself, Jeeves," I said moodily. "Personally, my heart is dead and I am going to look in at the Goat and Grapes for another of their cyanide specials and then home."

It must have been about half past ten, and I was in the old sitting room somberly sucking down a more or less final restorative, when the front doorbell rang, and there on the mat was young Tuppy. He looked like a man who has passed through some great experience and stood face to face with his soul. He had the beginnings of a black eye.

"Oh, hullo, Bertie," said young Tuppy.

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He came in and hovered about the mantelpiece, as if he were looking for things to fiddle with and break.

"I've just been singing at Beefy Bingham's entertainment," he said after a pause. "You weren't there, by any chance?"

"Oh, no," I said. "How did you go?"

"Like a breeze," said young Tuppy. "Held them spellbound."

"Knocked 'em, eh?"

"Cold," said young Tuppy. "Not a dry eye."

And this, mark you, a man who had had a good upbringing and had, no doubt, spent years at his mother's knee being taught to tell the truth.

"I suppose Miss Bellinger is pleased?"

"Oh, yes. Delighted."

"So now everything's all right?"

"Oh, quite." Tuppy paused. "On the other hand, Bertie——"

"Yes?"

"Well, I've been thinking things over. Somehow, I don't believe Miss Bellinger is the mate for me, after all."

"What!"

"No, I don't."

"What makes you think that?"

"Oh, I don't know. These things sort of flash on you. I respect Miss Bellinger, Bertie. I admire her. But——er——well, I can't help feeling now that a sweet, gentle girl——er——like your cousin, Angela, Bertie——would——er——in fact—— Well, what I came round for was to ask if you

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would phone Angela and find out how she reacts to the idea of coming out with me tonight to the Berkeley for a bit of supper and a spot of dancing."

"Go ahead. There's the phone."

"No; I'd rather you asked her, Bertie. With one thing and another, if you paved the way—— You see, there's just a chance that she may be—I mean, you know how misunderstandings occur—and—well, what I'm driving at, Bertie, old man, is that I'd rather you surged round and did a bit of paving, if you don't mind."

I went to the phone and called up Angela.

"She says come right round," I said.

"Tell her," said Tuppy in a devout sort of voice, "that I will be with her in something under a couple of ticks."

He had barely biffed, when I heard a click in the key-hole and a soft padding in the passage without.

"Jeeves," I called.

"Sir," said Jeeves, manifesting himself.

"Jeeves, a remarkably rummy thing has happened. Mr. Glossop has just been here. He tells me all is off between him and Miss Bellinger."

"Yes, sir."

"You don't seem surprised."

"No, sir. I confess I had anticipated some such eventuality."

"Eh? What gave you that idea?"

"It came to me, sir, when I observed Miss Bellinger strike Mr. Glossop in the eye."

"Strike him!"

"Yes, sir."

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"In the eye?"

"The right eye, sir."

I clutched the brow. "What on earth made her do that?"

"I fancy she was a little upset, sir, at the reception accorded her singing."

"Great Scott! Don't tell me she got the bird, too?"

"Yes, sir."

"But why? She's got a red-hot voice."

"Yes, sir. But I think the audience resented her choice of a song."

"Jeeves!" Reason was beginning to do a bit of tottering on its throne. "You aren't going to stand there and tell me that Miss Bellinger sang 'Sonny Boy,' too!"

"Yes, sir. And—mistakenly, in my opinion—brought a large doll onto the platform to sing it to. The audience affected to mistake it for a ventriloquist's dummy, and there was some little disturbance."

"But Jeeves, what a coincidence!"

"Not altogether, sir. I ventured to take the liberty of accosting Miss Bellinger on her arrival at the hall and recalling myself to her recollection. I then said that Mr. Glossop had asked me to request her that as a particular favor to him—the song being a favorite of his—she would sing 'Sonny Boy.'

"And when she found that you and Mr. Glossop had also sung the song immediately before her, I rather fancy that she supposed that she had been made the victim of a practical pleasantry by Mr. Glossop. Will there be anything further, sir?"

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"No, thanks."

"Good night, sir."

"Good night, Jeeves," I said reverently.



A 3-Months-Old Baby In The African Jungle

By Vera, Countess Da Gama



MY EXPERIENCE in the African bush with my three-months-old baby will live with me all the days of my life. But I could not write in retrospect anything half so exciting as the recordings in my diary during that period. Even now as I reach the point where, with shaking fingers, I made the entry, "My baby is dying," I wonder how I ever lived through the terrifying weeks that followed.

Before admitting you to the pages of my diary let me picture for you how our jungle adventures began.

We had been married, Vasco Da Gama and myself, only a short while, and after a motor trip through Europe we debated the question of going to Africa or India to hunt. We finally abandoned India for the unknown adventures that might await us in the Dark Continent. And because of the excitement of the chase. Further than that, it was thrilling for me to visualize my husband in Africa. For at the mouth of the Congo River is a monu-

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ment which commemorates the time his noted ancestor-explorer, Vasco Da Gama, stopped for water to provision his ships for the historic trip which opened the sea-route to India four hundred years ago.

After an interview with King Albert of Belgium the day of days finally came. All our supplies were aboard the S. S. Elisabethville bound for Matadi in the Belgian Congo, whence we intended to start across Equatorial Africa.

But no sooner had we passed Dakar than I found our expedition included a stowaway, an explorer who had not been accounted for when our ship left Antwerp. To have a child born in the part of Africa we were headed for was something not to be thought of, and besides, my husband wanted his child, the seventeenth descendant of his distinguished ancestor, to be born on American soil. It was almost impossible for him to postpone an expedition for which such extensive preparations had been made. So we decided I should go back to New York while my husband started a first trip across the forest.

Some months later he came back to the coast and cabled me. I wired back that the child was born, that we were both in excellent health, that I was anxious to rejoin him, and that the baby would remain with my mother. This had been my intention until approaching the day of sailing. But the wrench was too great and guiltily I carried my baby aboard, fearing, as you may well imagine, the reception awaiting us at the other end.

There is no doubt that many of my readers will be convinced that it was an insane move to take so young a

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child into so many unknown dangers, but like all pleasurable reading this has a happy ending. The littlest big-game hunter and explorer not only survived his parents' expedition, but is healthy and strong as a result of the life he led in the open.

After two months we arrived at Matadi and a small boat conveying my husband came to meet us. His surprise and indignation knew no bounds. Although he knew nothing of children, it seemed that once more his expedition after lions and other big game was up against an impossibility. Starting into the interior with a baby meant facing not only the hardships of the climate but also the difficulties attendant upon a trek of several months, traveling by canoes or in caravans across the forest, exposing the infant to the most irregular hours so far as rest and feedings went, tsetse flies carrying the germs of sleeping sickness, mosquitoes with their accompanying malarial ills, and other insects of the jungle.

Fearing once more I was to be sent away, I assured my husband that the only thing necessary for an infant was good food and plenty of sleep. I had brought many cases containing the best foodstuffs for him that I could find in the United States. Sleeping would be an easy matter to arrange as long as the child could be carried in some sort of bed covered by mosquito netting to protect him from insects.

At last Vasco agreed that it might be feasible and the next morning we took the little train which in two weary days of travel covered one hundred and seventy-five miles to Stanley Pool.

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Now you have the setting for our trip. As to the adventures, the almost disastrous fate that awaited the baby, I leave you to my diary.

July 1st

We are leaving for French Equatorial Africa, and are very excited, remembering that the French government frankly admits cannibalism is openly practiced and taxes are not levied for the simple reason that the tax collector never returns.

July 4th

All packed and aboard a steamboat of the British Lever Oil Company which operates on the Congo River. We have seven boys and eighty loads comprising tents, beds, ammunition and food.

July 9th

Mossaka at last. We were met and entertained by the French officer commanding the post. He is collecting four canoes and eighty paddlers for our journey north-east. We had a little bed made for the baby copied from a folding rubber bathtub. Four small rods were screwed at the four ends and united at the tops with other rods, above which a mosquito net was hung. This bed will fit nicely into the canoes.

July 27th

The paddlers are here. A discomfoting sight, since we are headed for cannibal territory.

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A detail of native soldiers which has been put by the French government under my husband's orders is also here and will accompany us for a short distance.

July 28th

At last all preparations have been made for our three-weeks' trip up the Mossaka and Kouyou rivers, and we are on our way. We have been paddling for six hours in a large and comfortable pirogue. The baby is snug under mosquito netting, safe from the tsetse flies. The rhythm of the paddlers' songs is an excellent lullaby for him and he has slept most of the time. I am very proud of the littlest explorer.

Feeding the baby in these pirogues is comparatively easy. Every four hours I put to work my portable stove and without stopping the canoes his food is prepared. This morning we were received with great courtesy by a native chief and given gifts of eggs and chickens. The chief wanted to know whether Vasco had but one wife. He brought his latest acquisition for us to admire, a wretched child just reaching adolescence.

Vasco fired at several hippos, but it is doubtful if they were hit.

I saw my first big crocodile today asleep on a sand bar. Vasco went after it but its birds gave it notice of danger and it slid into the water with scarcely a ripple. The crocodiles always sleep with their mouths open and the little birds hop in and out, cleaning their teeth and warning them in case a noise is heard. Crocodiles are most unpleasant-looking things.

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The native women are very modest and do their bathing at night, and so provide these horrid creatures with many a meal. Often when the crocodiles are killed bangles are found in their stomachs.

August 1st

Our native soldiers and their women have left us, as it was understood they would not go farther than a certain section of the river. Now there is nothing to protect us but the nerve and courage of my husband. I got out two tiny American flags and crossed them on the largest pirogue, and I felt better after this gesture.

The women are curious about the baby and me. They are practically nude with the exception of heavy copper bracelets and anklets. The poor creatures are proud of these ornaments, in spite of the fact that the heavy things encumber their movements and result in sores.

Now it begins to be wild; the last vestige of the whites is behind us. Just a few years ago the chief of the village had the outposts decorated with human skulls as a warning to white men to stay away.

August 7th

We are still traveling up the river and camping on sand banks at night. I am more used to the idea of cannibals and animals and find myself adopting a fatalistic point of view. Either we will survive or we won't. The baby is thriving in this outdoor life.

We landed late at night and were ready to turn in early when mutiny broke out among the paddlers. Some of

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them attempted to steal our canoes and food, leaving us on the sand bar, a prey to crocodiles if we attempted to swim to the other shore.

Vasco quelled the riot by firing several shots over the paddlers' heads, forcing them to return immediately, and he then proceeded to chain the leaders up for the night. Six of them spent a cool and rainy night outside the tent and one white woman spent a restless night inside, anticipating a cut throat. Morning came after several centuries.

August 8th

The drums are sounding all the time up the rivers, telling of our coming. It gives me a creepy feeling to realize our every move is known. I feel trapped by the everlasting tom-toms.

The baby causes the greatest upheaval wherever we go. I simply make the natives fall in line and take turns in peeking at him. It prevents fighting and pushing against his crib with their dirty bodies. Baby seems to love them and rocks back and forth in his crib to the beat of the tom-tom.

We have arrived at the village of Bouyou where we set up our camp for ten days. This rest sounds good to me. The tent has been pitched on a bluff a few feet from the river.

As soon as we arrived the women were put to work clearing a place for the tent and they worked with their eyes on us more than on their task.

It is impossible to believe these people are human

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beings. The children refuse to come out; the dogs put their tails between their legs and run away at the sight of us. One child I met unexpectedly was frozen into a state of paralysis and could not even run away.

All preparations have been made for the first buffalo hunt tomorrow. For the first time I am to be left alone with these people and I have a clammy feeling at the prospect, but I won't spoil Vasco's fun by letting him know.

August 9th

Alone. Before daybreak Vasco left with the chief and his men. I promptly borrowed the bread knife from the cook. I shall be relieved when Vasco returns. Buffalo are particularly treacherous and dangerous to shoot and vindictive if wounded. I shall try to keep myself so busy I cannot think.

I am writing home, even if I cannot mail it for months. Anything to keep my mind from Vasco. He left at five A. M. and it is now two P. M. He is always back at ten. I have worn a path from the tent to the edge of the forest.

August 10th

At three P. M. Vasco came back from hunting in a state of exhaustion. He had shot five buffaloes, using the Mauser with the telescope. A Noble bullet, being defective, jammed. Great excitement in this and surrounding villages. Great arguing by the neighboring chiefs, who were entitled to none of the meat, but nevertheless

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felt that the whole kill was for them. Chief of the district showed up and demanded one buffalo for himself, giving in return five eggs, three of which were rotten.

Many callers from up and down the river, the object being meat. I had my first piece of buffalo meat for dinner. It was tougher than the hinges of Hades.

Vasco also shot a huge monkey which the men ate raw with gusto.

August 11th

Baby tried to crawl for the first time. Now my troubles will start.

Vasco has gone hunting again. More anxiety for me. I cannot explain the feeling when I hear a shot and then one or two more, for I do not know whether or not the animal has charged him. I feel a million years old when he is in the bush.

He has just come back. In two hours he killed seven buffaloes, a record I am sure no other hunter can equal. I am so proud of him, but I cannot help regarding all this meat with a jaundiced eye. Suppose more chiefs with more rotten eggs make their appearance! Bad eggs for good meat seem to be legal tender around here.

Their wrangling over the different parts of the animal is most interesting. They act like dogs fighting over bones. Buffalo meat is hard to get unless one has a gun and naturally they have none. They seem to lose their heads with so much meat around and the days are full of fighting and the nights are full of feasting.

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This time the wash boy, who has been talking big about helping the white man kill a buffalo, accompanied the hunt, but he had to be helped out of the canoe when he came back and was the first pale negro I ever met.

I caught the house boys polishing themselves with a cake of my precious soap. This gives a high polish to their skins and is considered chic. Vasco is speaking of leaving me alone while he goes away for a few days.

Never did I expect to live in a cannibal village alone with a baby. I think I shall suffer with a case of permanent goose flesh all my life. Baby is making little noises that sound like "Mamma."

August 14th

I spent two days putting things in apple-pie order. Boiled water all morning and filtered it in the afternoon. Another chief came to call. The house boys were at the river bathing and I was alone and rather frightened when the murderous-looking old rascal with a knife in his hand leaned over the baby's crib. I slipped my revolver from its holster and glared. False alarm! He grinned at me, the baby cooed at him, and a tense situation was relieved. I cannot help feeling a cannibal's interest in a baby is not entirely altruistic.

August 16th

I tore loose this morning on my household force. Heaven help the defenseless woman who spends her life in Africa dependent upon native help! Impossible to inculcate any ideas of cleanliness. The tablecloth is inva-

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riably rolled in a ball and usually is to be found in a corner of the cook tent. Rubbish is knee-deep in the kitchen, and the state of pots and pans is enough to make the angels weep.

I have decided to raise Cain thrice a week with the entire force. One must be a combination of a shrew, virago and hell-cat to get any results. These natives are lazy, dirty, shiftless. Sometimes I feel as if I'd like to grab helmet and child and get out.

Vasco went hunting again at four o'clock and returned at six, having killed four buffaloes. His score now stands at fifty. I think this is the greatest record ever made.

August 17th

Today I introduced my force to work. And spent the morning hurling pans and invective. A *tipoye* was made in which to carry baby. It is fashioned like a miniature native hut and covered with a thatch of thick grass to protect the baby from the chemical rays of the sun. There is enough room inside for the mattress, and the opening is protected by a netting. A small drawer holds fresh linen, boric powder and boiled water. It constitutes a first-class carriage. I am fully determined that my son shall have the ultimate in comfort. Every four hours he is fed and sponged off, and his linen is changed.

September 1st

Last night I had the thrill that comes once in a lifetime. We were enjoying our dinner near the river's edge under a full moon as clear as day. Suddenly the drums

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started to beat and two of our men came to us saying that a village down the river was reporting the presence of a herd of elephants and they were moving towards our camp.

Vasco promptly called a few paddlers and a canoe was made ready and my chair was quickly installed aboard. He knelt in the bow with his rifle ready and in silence we pushed away from shore.

We drifted in the current to avoid noise, as the slightest sound would be magnified by the water and the herd would be put to flight. In the stern a paddler held a large stone tied to the canoe by a long vine, which was to be used as an anchor.

We drifted down the river under the magnificent setting of the African forest and when we had gone about a mile we could hear the rumbling of the elephant herd in the distance. The greatest care was exercised by everyone to avoid noise. I held my breath in suppressed excitement, although I felt that the elephants surely could hear my heartbeats.

We heard them plainly when they were about one hundred yards ahead and twenty yards inland, and in absolute quiet we covered the intervening distance and reached a point directly opposite the herd.

They were busy feeding and while we were waiting to see if they would come to the river for water I sat in that boat momentarily expecting to be picked up by an inquiring trunk.

By means of signs Vasco ordered a native to go ashore to see what was happening. The man stepped out into

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the shallow water and crawled upon his stomach through the underbrush, making his way to a tree. With the agility of a monkey he swung himself upward into the branches. We waited impatiently and when he did not return Vasco followed him.

I remained in the canoe until suddenly I heard two shots fired almost simultaneously. The spurts of flame could be seen plainly through the branches.

A few seconds later the native who was up in the tree scrambled down shouting, "*Akoufi*" ("dead"). At that moment the male leader of the herd trumpeted for them to rally together for flight and the silence of the forest was shattered by the crashing of branches.

I promptly went ashore. There in the moonlight I saw my husband standing between two huge elephants. Each had fallen dead at a single shot from his rifle.

September 7th

Vasco left at dawn to go hunting and returned with five buffaloes. We are waiting for men from Fort Rousset to proceed farther by caravan.

Two of my chickens have died but excellent health is enjoyed by the hen I call the "Apprehensive One." This chicken has witnessed the execution of several others and gives the impression of being constantly on guard lest the same fate befall her unawares. She has a nervous temperament. Her worst fears will materialize when meat gets low, however. The household now gives the impression of being thoroughly subdued. The boys must have thought our trip included a pleasure

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jaunt for them also. Things running better today, but I dare not be too optimistic.

September 9th

One buffalo. Score fifty-six. So sickened by the sight of them I can't eat any more. The "Apprehensive One" is no more. Her fears materialized. But I am sorry I ordered her execution. She was frightfully tough, therefore thoroughly avenged. The porters arrived.

September 10th

Left by caravan for Fort Rousset. Today's performance enlivened by the appearance of a snake crossing the road directly in my path. Vasco followed it into the bush and killed it. Inspection showed it to be the dreaded "babalier," a snake whose bite is deadly; there is no known serum to counteract it. I fear snakes more than any big game.

Two more buffaloes killed en route. I assisted for the first time in a buffalo hunt. My heart was in my mouth. The tent was up and I had just finished the baby's toilet for the night and was looking forward to dinner and rest, when the chief sent two men to Vasco to tell him that about two hundred yards away a large buffalo was standing on a bluff.

We hastily took rifles and followed the men through the high grass, which completely hid us. The animal did not seem aware of our advance.

My husband and the chief motioned to me to remain still when we were within shooting distance. This met

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with my unqualified approval. They advanced closer. How kingly was the animal's mien as he stood in the pale moonlight, lord of all he surveyed! One shot, a pathetic "moo," then silence.

He was huge. Before the breath of life had left him the natives threw their spears into the animal, screaming and dancing around him. They then cut up the carcass and the women plaited grass baskets and carried it to the encampment, where it was put into pots and boiled.

September 12th

My first day in an African *tipoye*. When night came I felt that the base of my spine had risen behind my ears. As we passed through the villages the howling of the porters was terrific. There was the usual curiosity to see the baby, who likes his new *tipoye*.

September 14th

We arrived at Fort Rousset late in the afternoon. The prospect of a day's rest is indeed marvelous. We had the administrator to dinner—a strictly canned affair. He has a large vegetable garden and we relish the prospect of a return of our hospitality.

We thought a riot had broken loose when we passed through a village before we reached Fort Rousset. Women mobbed the baby's *tipoye* in a rush to see the white child. A goat joined the expedition today.

We left for Makwa early this morning. I bought a queer-looking idol of carved wood used in cannibal

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feasts. It is interesting to note that the native idols are painted a light tan instead of black.

I forgot to say that the administrator of Fort Rousset gave us a cat. His wife has two servants, both murderers and condemned to death. They have an extended lease on life as long as they perform their offices satisfactorily. After the day's work is done they return quietly to their prison cells. Think of the excellence of service assured to Madame, for any dissatisfaction expressed by her means the firing squad!

September 18th

Vasco decided that baby and I should remain in Makwa for a week or two until he returns. I am sorry not to be able to watch him shoot elephants. We noticed a fine-looking woman in the caravan, and thought she was the wife of a soldier. This morning her real husband appeared to claim her. We were astounded to find that our he-laundress had stolen her in Fort Rousset. We expected bloodshed at the least. Nothing but conversation ensued, however. Our servant wanted to buy the woman and her husband was willing, but Vasco saved the day by vetoing the sale. The woman returned with her husband.

September 20th

Alas, for my day of rest! Vasco sent word that he wanted me to go to Mohali to wait for him. Hitherto I have not taken a step alone in Africa, but I am game. This place is too awful on account of the mosquitoes.

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The administrator called, offering his services to help me en route. He is a nice man but it is hard to understand his black-mistress complex. The woman followed him in, dressed in her best. I paid not the slightest attention to her. However, as soon as the administrator became aware of her presence he dismissed her. She went with bad grace.

My Kentucky ancestry rebels against the thought of a white man having a negress for a mistress. When one dines with the men, one always feels the presence of these women jealously peering from the shadows.

This is the last white man. Those who have penetrated farther have never returned, so no attempt is made by the government to levy taxation beyond this point.

I made my first trip by caravan alone, spending the night in a native village. As night was approaching a soldier informed me there was no manioc for the porters. No greater tragedy could have befallen them. We had arrived at two-thirty P. M. and it was six when my attention was called to the fact. The interval had been spent reviewing the fact, discussing it pro and con, up and down.

I inquired why they had not levied on the nearest village. This had never occurred to them. The natives, with their natural acceptance of fate, finding no manioc, never thought of amending this condition by walking a mile to obtain it. My suggestion filled them with surprise and they acted upon it with alacrity. So peace descended once more.

I have now collected fourteen chickens. Eggs, how-

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ever, are scarce. I am convinced my husband cornered the egg market when he went through the villages three days ago. I took some pictures.

September 21st

On our way to the village where I stayed overnight I had luncheon at another village. The chief called to pay his respects. He saw baby and sent the news through the village. The inhabitants fell in line and passed baby with open mouths of surprise. He enjoyed it immensely.

That night, after obtaining their manioc, the natives gathered around the camp fire to discuss the events of the day. I called out "*Asili*" ("be quiet"), to which they paid not the slightest attention. Seeing that the baby was awake and that the hubbub continued, I called out "*Kongo M'Noko*" ("close your mouth"). This met with no response, so I advanced upon this group of cannibals armed with an umbrella, stamped out their fire and sent them flying in every direction. Thereafter, the baby slept peacefully.

September 23rd

En route to Mohali. A letter from my husband arrived just as the caravan was ready to start. I was surprised and incidentally amused to receive the letter wrapped in tissue paper tied with elephant hair. The natives are afraid of writing. They think that the paper on which a letter is written talks to the white man to whom it is delivered, and as they are superstitious they never touch it. They receive a note on a large leaf, wrap

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it inside that leaf, without touching it, then take a stick two or three feet long, splitting one end of the stick and inserting the letter in the slit. They run for days carrying this stick, which they always deliver to the addressee, who is known to them by his native name.

Mohali, September 27th

Three men arrived, carrying a gorilla hide and skull and a pair of tusks from an elephant shot by Vasco. I offered N'Goua a present for preparing the skin so that we might keep it. The gorilla was over five feet tall, with enormous hands and feet.

I am giving baby his first coddled egg.

September 29th

The gorilla hide is now pinned down in the sun. I hope it can be scraped and cured satisfactorily. Two men came to me and asked me for the gorilla's brain. I watched them scrape it out and put it carefully on a large plantain leaf. But the stench was so bad I walked away and continued my vigil from a distance.

After all vestige of it was removed from the skull, they divided it equally and proceeded to devour it then and there—with relish.

Gorilla hands and feet impressed me as most pathetic. They are so human-looking.

A visiting chief watched me mix dried milk and feed the baby. He wanted to know whether white women lacked breasts and therefore were unable to feed their babies themselves. He was captivated by the sight of

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my pink silk knickers, which were hanging on an improvised clothesline. He asked for them, but as my wardrobe is small, I was forced to refuse. He was greatly downcast.

However, I had a mirror hanging in my tent which fascinated him. He would take the mirror and examine it closely, his nose pressed down on the glass. Time after time he would turn it over hastily to catch the man who was hiding in the back.

October 1st

Vasco's "monkey de luxe," as I call his gorilla, is stretched out on a frame being smoked. I expected my boys to be impressed by their master's prowess and marksmanship, and so they were—but not in the manner I expected. They resigned in a body, a fact I shall keep from Vasco in order not to cause him undue worry.

My foot hurt me today and I was irritable all afternoon, so when they approached me with long faces and told me that their far-away village was a good place to be and there were no terrible animals there, I told them to go on back, and, in true American fashion, to "make it snappy!"

This caused the usual lengthy discussion among them. At eight o'clock they changed their minds and were content to remain. Poor devils, now they are around the fire which is smoking the hide.

October 2nd

My son is seven months old today. I spent three days

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breaking him of sucking his thumb, but he doesn't take kindly to the idea. Today, however, he has eaten his dinner without a battle.

October 3rd

A soldier came to me this morning shaking with fear. In his hand he held a block of wood, the center of which was hollowed out and filled with wood ashes and the charred remains of palm nuts. He explained to me that the witch doctor of another village had put that on a path over which he knew the soldier would pass.

According to the soldier's belief, once he walked over this piece of wood he was doomed to death. He felt that it was pointed at me, for the removal of the soldier would make it easier to attack a white woman who was alone. I calmed his fears and ordered him to go into the village, to return with the witch doctor and to keep him a prisoner until the time when the white man would return to administer justice.

October 5th

When a feller needs a friend! A leopard came into my tent last night and killed my pet cat. I must have had a premonition of something wrong, for I woke up and took the baby into my bed.

I heard the agonized cry of my cat and tried to see what caused it, but my flashlight refused to work.

There was no moon and I could see nothing but I was poignantly aware that something was prowling around the tent. As I could not see to shoot I sat up in bed and

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emitted a shriek for help. There followed only silence and lots of it.

Finally, hoarse with yelling, as I held onto the baby, expecting momentarily to have the animal spring on us, I saw the flash of a light and the tent flap was pushed back, revealing the cook.

Angry as I was at the delay, I burst out laughing. He had stopped to dress fully, in a discarded hat and a pair of shoes belonging to Vasco, before attempting a rescue. For once I thoroughly enjoyed the sight of my African Beau Nash and "what the well-dressed man is wearing."

In the morning the tracks of the leopard showed he had left in haste.

The wash boy persists in wearing my tablecloth instead of his loin cloth while doing the washing at the river bank. This called for renewed hostilities which ended in my slapping him and threatening to hand him over to the tender mercies of the *Mondele* (white man).

October 6th

I was having my bath today when I heard a commotion outside. I thought perhaps it was a visiting chief passing through the village, so did not get excited. Imagine my surprise at hearing Vasco's voice outside the tent. He will be here for three days. I am so happy.

October 7th

Vasco held court this morning. A sick chief from a neighboring village was brought in on a *tipoye* to answer

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in person for the fact that eggs had been refused me. The nearer he got to Vasco the sicker he was—what unconscious actors the blacks are! I cannot understand these rows about eggs. Most of those presented to me are bad, but I always pay for them.

Two men were lashed by the soldier as a result of judgment and locked in my henhouse. I feel that they are not a good influence on my chickens.

Today we had a rainstorm and the prisoners were put to work digging trenches around the tent. Vasco sent the witch doctor to Makwa to spend two weeks in a chain gang for trying to kill the soldier. I am wondering why he wanted the soldier out of the way, and am convinced it was that he might slit my throat with less difficulty. The chief brought me some unpleasant-tasting honey. I gave it to the boys—a royal present for them.

October 10th

Vasco left again. This time he will cross the Opa River to do some shooting there. He expects to be gone two weeks. The baby is growing active. He has cut his two upper teeth first. He just *would* jinx himself with the natives. I hope he keeps his mouth shut as the old superstition about death for babies cutting their upper teeth first exists here also. He wants to crawl around.

October 12th

Nothing much to speak of except that baby laughed out loud this morning, showing his new teeth to my

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scandalized cook. My household force are looking at me reproachfully, wondering why I don't drown him.

I saw a native wearing a discarded sardine-can opener through his nose. He was the envy of the village.

October 14th

A note and a present came from Vasco today. The latter was a small monkey. Vasco always threatened to give me one. Now the blow has fallen. He is a cunning little chap. The natives call him "Boubou," which is "monkey" in Bangali.

I had the boys wash and disinfect Boubou. But the poor thing is terrorized at the sight of a white person. I tied him to the pole of my tent, occasionally offering him a banana and condensed milk. Finally, he became convinced that I would not harm him. It is no longer necessary to tie him to the tent, except that I caught him running his fingers through the baby's hair looking for fleas.

October 17th

Ants by the millions. At two-thirty in the morning I was awakened from a heavy sleep by the sound of the natives dancing outside my tent waving firebrands. It first occurred to me that this was the end, but I dashed out of the tent, gun in hand, to face a situation that I never dreamed possible.

Ants by the millions, steadily marching from the forest in the direction of my chicken house, and the natives, having my well-being at heart, had provided

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themselves with torches and were digging a trench around the tent and throwing in burning firewood to turn the ants from their course.

Some of these ants got on me and it was necessary to pick them off—pulling the flesh with them—for they fasten on so that it is impossible to brush them off. They marched for eighteen hours, a black ribbon three feet wide. When they left, finally, there was nothing to show that a chicken had ever existed. It was a sight I shall never forget.

I am worried about the baby. He seems to have a touch of diarrhea. Everybody is sick. Soldier has a cold. I have tonsilitis.

October 19th

Baby is very sick. His temperature is $103\frac{1}{2}$. It is no time for me to be sick. I dread telling Vasco, who is days away in the forest. I am trying everything I have in the pharmacy box.

October 22nd

I cannot reduce the baby's fever. His temperature is 105. It is imperative that I get to the river. The nearest doctor is many weeks away. I am writing Vasco, telling him I am moving.

My baby is dying! God help me. Temperature 105.

Later . . .

Throughout these trying days I have had no time to write. I was too weary when I did find the time, too

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broken to care to review the heartbreaking experience. When I saw I could do nothing to stop the ravages of baby's illness I made a desperate effort to reach the river, although I knew it was a three-weeks' trip to the nearest doctor.

I sent a note to Vasco urging him to come at once, and then, hoping against hope that I could get men to go, I sent for the village chief and told him that the little white man was dying. The men in his village were away hunting, but he sent into the thickest bush and collected porters for me so wild-looking that the sight of them froze my blood.

Early the following morning I set out with the baby in his *tipoye*, carrying with me only the things that were absolutely necessary for the trip. Instead of letting the men go at a leisurely gait, I forced them steadily onward.

First came grumbling and black looks. I dared not stop, I was afraid to go forward, but the sight of my suffering baby gave me courage to force them ahead.

The grumbling grew to greater proportions and several of the porters threw down their loads and started into the bush. A few who were more sympathetic ran after them and brought them back, and I chained them and forced them to march ahead of me.

To be carried in my *tipoye* was out of the question. Not only were the men angry, but I feared their rage would grow and perhaps be directed at my helpless little one. So with my gun in one hand and my thermometer in the other, I marched them on. That night I was afraid

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to sleep. Black looks met me on every side. But finally I managed to get to Makwa.

I spent three days in the village collecting paddlers for the journey. I was half crazed with fear, watching the little life ebb away. I had had but a few hours' sleep in ten days; my eyeballs were icy-cold. I was so exhausted I felt I was moving like an automaton, but I never gave up hope.

I had sent numerous messages to my husband, who was rushing through the forest, to keep him informed of my progress and to urge him to join me as rapidly as possible. All plans were made for me to leave the evening of the fourth day and, utterly exhausted, I threw myself on my bed and fell asleep.

I was awakened by my husband's voice. What a shock my letter must have been to him, when he was sure that we were well in Mohali. Without wasting a second, he had called his men together and in a few minutes camp was struck and he was on his way.

Vasco, after a forced march of days, reached the river bank opposite the village where I waited.

There was no canoe there to take him across, and his shouts failed to waken any of the natives asleep on the other bank. He pulled a pistol from his belt and fired several shots over the huts, which finally brought a canoe to the bank on which he was standing.

When he landed he ran towards the higher part of the village, wondering what was awaiting him and whether his child would still be alive. He entered a hut where he saw a storm lamp burning.

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I had not heard the shots and was lying there under a mosquito netting, with hundreds of mosquitoes buzzing around. On another bed covered by a netting was the baby, so thin and so pale that Vasco hardly recognized him.

No words can describe our feelings. When Vasco asked me how the baby was, I admitted that I feared it was no more than a question of hours.

Then among the buzzing mosquitoes, a consultation took place. There was at least a three-weeks' journey down the rivers to the doctor at the English Mission at Bolobo. That time could be cut in half by traveling day and night, but the only available canoes in Makwa were the ones used by fishermen. These canoes were about two and a half feet wide and thirty feet long, and traveling at night in them would be most uncomfortable. Besides, the Makwa and the Kouyou rivers are full of whirlpools and sunken trees.

Vasco asked whether I thought it would be better to wait a few days in Makwa, where the baby could rest, rather than start on such a journey. I said I preferred to go down the rivers.

Around five o'clock, a half-hour before dark, we baptized our child (being Catholics), a provision which had not been attended to before. When this ceremony took place in the little hut at Makwa our nerves almost broke down.

A few minutes later, carried by the negroes, the little bed containing our child was taken to the banks of the river and put carefully into the canoe. Two automobile

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blankets were hung under the roof in order to make a closed cabin where the baby could rest.

The cook's assistant was put on board, also Moke, the boy who had been helping me take care of baby, twelve or fifteen paddlers, a cook box, some cold chicken which I had prepared during the afternoon, and a few assorted tins of food. The rest of our own men, including four native soldiers, were to follow in the other canoes with our cases.

This first night was a horror. I could not sleep, as I was reviewing the incidents of the last days. I feared the baby had no chance to pull through and the problem of disposing of his body obsessed my mind. The waters were high, making it impossible to find land where he could be buried should he pass away during the night. To bury him on a sand bar was equally impossible as the waters after the next rain would uncover his body, which would then have been eaten by crocodiles. I finally reached the conclusion the best thing would be to wrap him in a blanket and put him in one of our steel cases, or else burn him. A gruesome problem to confront a mother!

It was about six in the morning and the sun was already up when we saw ahead of us the great sand bar of Dongounhama, a village not far from that bend of the river. Our baby did not seem worse, although his pallor had increased and his pulse had gone down. The fact that he had lived through the night heartened us.

This was the first moment since Vasco had arrived in Makwa when we could talk matters over quietly.

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Vasco asked me if I had used everything that our medicine books recommended for such cases, and of course I had.

Before we had left Kinshassa, shortly after our reunion, Vasco had been told that the main cause of infantile death in the tropics was diarrhea, and the chemist whom he had interviewed on that subject had recommended to him a certain French product, explaining that this medicine was effective in such cases.

Vasco had bought a box containing four tubes, each filled with about ten pills. I had given the baby almost all of them without success. While we were discussing the matter, by good luck, the French prospectus fell from a large leather bag in which I had dropped all small items that had not been packed in the cases.

Vasco read the prospectus and learned that these pills could be given to the child dissolved in water by mouth and also as an enema. I had used them in the former way since I had been unable to read the prospectus, which was written in French. I had not known the medicine could be given in any other way.

We at once hunted up the little box in which three pills were left and decided to try the enema.

But unfortunately we did not have with us the necessary equipment. In one case, though, we discovered a rubber tube. In his gun case, which never left him, Vasco had a small battered tin funnel, which he used for pouring boiling water through the barrels of his rifles to clean them. This funnel was rusty, but the natives promptly cleaned it with sand.

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The tubing was not large enough to fit the funnel, and I held it for a few minutes in boiling gun oil to distend the rubber. The whole thing was thoroughly sterilized in boiling water and with it we accomplished our purpose. I held the baby, a native held the funnel, while another native poured the medicine into the funnel. We repeated the treatment some time later, and from that moment the baby began to improve.

The next afternoon we reached the village of N'Touko, where we hoped to change paddlers and have a rest. Baby seemed somewhat improved. While looking around for several natives to take with us on the next leg of the journey we heard the most terrible screaming from the direction of the chief's hut.

It developed that the detested chief of the village was dying and that the screaming was due to joy at his passing. The dying man's grave had already been dug, amid dancing and rejoicing.

Under no circumstances would any native of that village forgo the festivities or the pleasure of throwing the chief into his grave. Some spearmen appeared and Vasco realized that not one paddler could be forced out of the village that night without a fight.

We hurried back to the canoes, where our faithful paddlers of the previous night were waiting for orders to disembark. We explained what had happened and demanded that they continue paddling one more night to the next village.

The poor men pleaded with us, showing their ankles, swollen from standing for the twenty-four-hours' pad-

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dling, their hands blistered and bloody from the paddles, but we had to steel our hearts to their sufferings. We told them we must go for the "Bwana Moke's" sake and mercifully they consented to continue one more night in spite of their fatigue.

My little baby, when you are older and can read this diary of your mother's, be grateful to these unknown black men. They did their best, and it was their best that carried you through this darkest hour of babyhood.

I cooked some chicken broth for the baby, and my heart sings with happiness to see him eat some of it. I hope he is now definitely on the road to recovery.

One more night of upset. Another set to with the new paddlers, who would not paddle if we slept. Vasco had to stand guard all night, it being my turn to sleep.

Two more days have passed and we are now in Loboko. We change here into a larger canoe with a little hut aboard. Such luxury—such affluence! The baby is steadily improving but he is just a bundle of bones. He is alive, though, and that is all that counts.

We are still going night and day. Our cases have caught up with us. I am now feeling the after-effects of this tremendous strain. We are nearing Mossaka, and even this dirty post is heaven.

A tiny steamboat takes us to Bolobo. But oh, the irony of things! The doctor has gone into the bush to treat sleeping sickness and is not due back for several weeks. Two English nurses, however, have given me all the help they could. Baby is improving steadily. All dan-

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ger is past. Once more I can draw a free though weary breath.

Months later, on baby's first birthday, we were camping in the Iluri forest and I expressed a regret that we had no toys for him. Almost immediately after I had spoken a native came up to tell Vasco that on the previous night an elephant had passed not far from our camp.

We left the baby in the care of Moke and started out after the elephant. Several hours later we caught up with him and Vasco shot the animal.

I told my husband the elephant should be baby's first birthday present, so after our return to camp we photographed him atop his gift. When he is older he will appreciate this sample of his father's excellent marksmanship.

So with one more entry I will end my diary—end it on a note of thankfulness.

What thrilling experiences have been mine since the day I faced my husband and told him I could enliven a hunting party by converting it into a kindergarten! But "that is another story."

Suffice it to say I made good the promise I made myself to bring my baby out of the jungle, where he had spent his first months surrounded by cannibals, tsetse flies, mosquitoes and wild animals, in as good health and spirits as he would have experienced in the nursery we left behind.

The littlest big-game hunter lived up to the standards

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and while he never shot a lion, he spent his time profitably cutting teeth, which is just as satisfactory to his mother. And above all, he gives me the opportunity to say to my husband, "I told you so."



These Folks Really Like Us

By Irvin S. Cobb



IMA, where have you been all my life? Behold, here is a jewel box of a city. Whether you are a student of the olden civilizations of the New World or a mere casual sight-seer, Lima has, in compact forms, all that a city could offer you, all the beauty you could ask for, all the quaintness and picturesqueness, all the physical and spiritual essentials, and enough historical background to satisfy anybody.

As to its lately remodeled sections, it is an admirable conglomerate of modern ideals and yet is in all ways individualistic, this last being due, I should say, to the fact that of the major South American capitals it remains the most Spanishized both as to architecture and as to the modes and moods of the people.

Go into its newly transformed parts, and what with the impressive government buildings and public buildings, the sweeping, beautifully paved boulevards, the nobly planned system of squares and parks and parkways and the swarming automobiles and taxicabs, there is about it a suggestion of Washington.

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Then step around the corner and you might fancy yourself in Seville or Cádiz—women in mantillas slipping in and out of some crumbly old church; *cholos* leading laden donkeys along narrow, rutted streets where the house eaves in perspective seem almost to meet overhead; sidewalk markets; shop fronts with gay and curious wares; priests and soldiers; ragged aborigines and dapper municipal guards; a volume of rippling Latin voices mingling with the harsher patois of the *barbaro*—the Indian out of the interior.

Mostly, though, and especially with regard to its central portions where the principal shopping district is and the chief civic improvements of the last decade present themselves, Lima has rather the savor and the aspect of Paris: a Paris in miniature, a charming bijou of a Paris, let us say, but glory be, a Paris in which there are no swarming beggars, no greasy degenerates with vile photographs for sale, no rat-eyed "guides" importuning you to go with them to witness spectacles of unutterable depravity, no taxicabbists who insult you if you fail to tip them thrice as much as anybody else tips, no shopkeepers who fawn on you if you purchase and sneer at you if you decline to purchase.

The tradespeople, like all the rest of the people of Lima that I encountered, were courteous and gracious. They'd rather lose a trade than lose their dignity; and therein, you will allow, they are not at all like Parisians.

Now then, picture this altogether fine little combination of Paris and Washington—with that piquant dash

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of Seville thrown in for seasoning—as embowered in a gorgeous semitropical setting nine miles back from the salt water, with the towering ramparts of the Cordilleras, which are the most westerly chain of the intertwining Andean ranges, rearing themselves behind her.

Think of her as crowning a gently sloped plateau whereon rain, as we know rain, almost never falls, but where irrigation ditches carrying the volumes of impounded mountain streams produce from a sandy volcanic loam so much of lush, rank richness that the long-staple cotton grows in trees instead of on plants, and the sugar cane is thick and tall like bamboo, and the flowers, including the imported flowers of the North Temperate Zone, attain to an unbelievable size and luxuriance, and, in addition to an enormous variety of native fruits and vegetables, such familiar delicacies as strawberries and green corn and watermelons may be had practically the year round at exceedingly low prices.

See Lima in the midst of her summer, which is our midwinter, when the flowering locust trees, which line the streets and the roads everywhere, are just beginning to spill their wistaria-like blooms so that the grass beneath every tree is deeply carpeted with blossoms that have fallen, and each vista is flanked with great clumps of blossoms that have not yet been shaken off; and the honey-colored Peruvian sunshine is gleaming through the masses of it all, embroidering the whole visible face of the earth with alternated bandings of royal purple and the purest, yellowest gold.

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See Lima, in that regally brocaded dress of hers, as we did, and murmur to yourself, as we did: "We North Americans are supposed to be the most insatiable flit-about of the universe—forever poking into far corners of the planet on the quest after what is worth while and what is delectable. And here is this town of Lima lying, so to speak, at our very threshold, and yet for every one of us who has looked on Lima there are thousands who have been to Paris and have done London and have seen Berlin or Rome or Florence or Vienna."

Lima, what do you mean by it—hiding yourself away like this? You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Or maybe we're the ones who ought to be ashamed!

A stop at Lima is surely the climax of the journey down the West Coast, but what befalls before then and what follows afterward have much to allure the newcomer.

The sea voyage is unlike any other I've ever taken. If from Panama you sail late at night, as we did, you arise next morning to find yourself out of sight of land. You are gliding over a placid sunlit course, with the flying fish flashing in and out of the lazy waves alongside like flights of silver teaspoons, and maybe a sea lion or two to show its twisting body like a huge, slick worm.

If you have the same luck we had, the Pacific will live up to its name and general reputation during the entire trip. That suits this subscriber. The poetic rooter who stood on the side lines urging the deep and dark blue ocean to roll on was not related to our family. Any time the waters take his foolish advice my ballast begins to

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shift and the water-tight compartments seem to give way, and it's ho! and away to man the after rail, and if the women and children want to be first they'll have to hurry.

We slid over the equator and had the usual initiation of the novices, those who never had crossed the line before, with the usual horseplay. We had deck games. We had leisurely opportunity to get acquainted with our fellow travelers, finding them for the most part good company. There was an atmosphere of romance and drama to the adventure now; tales of strange places and strange peoples circulating; talk of curious customs and novel sights, such as llamas and live volcanoes, and of mysterious native products with fascinating names.

Later on we would have exciting events aboard—a wedding, with the captain officiating and a misguided wag pushing a commandeered baby carriage ahead of the embarrassed people in the impromptu parade; and also a birth, or rather, a double birth.

We had with us a German couple returning from the Vaterland to their present home down the coast. The story was that they had timed their return to the end that the wife might have the services of our ship's doctor and nurse. So, while this lady was about it, she had twins. You have to give the Germans credit for being thorough.

Through long restful days while the nimble trade winds blow, and through cool pleasant nights, you go lazying down the latitudes. On a morning which after-

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ward remains memorable, you come up on deck to find land crowding close upon either side of you.

On the left, the bleak Peruvian shore line lifts in a great naked palisade straight from the surf. On the right are barren islands, seemingly endless strings of them, streaked and mottled with white where the deposits of the precious guano lie. The sun casts soft lights—violet and blue in the shadows, cobalt and pink and brown in the clear—on every mounting pinnacle and every seamy cliff-face; and as the ship goes threading her narrowed route between the mainland just yonder and the shielding archipelago out beyond, her bows are crossed by swarming columns of sea birds—black, swift, streamy hordes of them which appear to have no beginnings and no endings.

I myself counted nine million, two hundred and seventy thousand, eight hundred and forty-one separate birds passing in front of us, and then I happened to look back and here came the main flock. Trying to take a bird census in the Pacific certainly is a discouraging job for an amateur.

From now on, the liner is rarely out of eyereach of that great mountainous parapet which, for the most part, rears up and up sheer from the water's edge.

As the generality of men reckon such things, it's not a friendly shore. It is appalling, frequently almost terrifying in its tremendousness and in its austerity; and it is hard to make oneself believe that on the farther side of that mighty mountain system of which this sierra is

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the skirmish line, a humid, fecund jungle hides the headwaters of the Amazon.

All the same, it gives the landlubber a vague sense of contact and comfort to have the earth always within view. Going ashore, there are one or two things he does well to remember. The Peruvians are most hospitable to visitors and most liberal in the matter of import taboos, but about matches they are fussy. Vending matches is a government monopoly and the transient who lands with a box of his own matches on him may get into a jam with the traffic regulations.

I can appreciate why the customhouse people are strict about matches but why should patent lighters be included in the embargo? What I say about the average patent lighter is that it provides a form of healthful light exercise and cuts down the smoking habit.

Also, the tourist should be careful about slinging Peru's currency around carelessly. It has a solidity which leads to embarrassment if it is handled with recklessness. Two dollars in change, dropped suddenly into the pocket, will pull your pants right off. In Brazil you have to be even more careful. One dollar in change will do the trick there.

We briefly visited one town—a lovely little town in an oasis of greenery with sterile desert all about it—where they told us there were thirty churches. But they are building some more and soon there will be churches for all. In the dusty small plaza of another town I looked upon the first of the countless array of monuments and

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statues which thereafter would pass in review before these dazzled eyes.

South America leads the world in statues. For its population it has infinitely more statues than we have, or than Europe has, but the palm for rearing homely statues still belongs to the United States; there we beat 'em all.

At that, I insist this statue we saw in this small Peruvian town has its claims any time the committee is trying to pick out the homeliest statue on earth. It was done—I could tell that much at a glance—by a Teutonic sculptor, probably a graduate of the Krupp works, and it represented Liberty, with the dropsy and water on both knees, in the act of saving sundry symbolic groups from servitude or tyranny or something. But these parties seemed hardly worth saving—they were all in the last stages of elephantiasis anyhow.

From a third town—Trujillo is its name and Salaverry is its neighbor—we drove out to visit the ruins of the Inca stronghold of Chan-Chan.

These original dwellers of the coast were not the incomparable stonemasons who set up their marvelous citadels that will endure forever in the clefts and on the slopes of the higher Andes. The interior tribes build for all time; they were the Indelible Incas. Down here near the ocean their cousins fashioned the temples and the citadels and the houses from mud-dried bricks, and only a few years back there was a sort of cloudburst and much of Chan-Chan was melted right back into the landscape.

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In this coastal country a sure-enough rain is a catastrophe and a calamity. Luckily for the citizens in the adobe villages it rains hard not once in a lifetime; but when it does, a *cholo* is liable to find his late place of residence running down the road.

I did not linger long among its crumbled walls. A member of a vanishing species is made melancholy when he looks upon the last stand of an extinct species. So I knew it was no place for an old-line Democrat to be tarrying about in; and I shed a few understanding tears and returned to Trujillo.

Here, as elsewhere along the line, our party of three created a distinct impression. Dean Palmer was thirty pounds heavier than Bill Hogg and Bill Hogg was fifteen pounds heavier than I was, and I was—and am—no tricky sprite myself. So these slender and frequently undersized townspeople used to stand aside in a stricken silence to watch us single-filing along the narrow pavements. I guess they were wondering what had become of our mahout.

Even in so metropolitan a place as Lima we commanded the silent respect of the populace. In the noble old cathedral, our advent created a distinct effect.

We went there for a special reason: to see the bones of the great Pizarro. As a discoverer and a conqueror, Pizarro bulks among the impressive figures of the past but as a cadaver in a glass case, he is not particularly impressive.

If I was slightly disappointed in Pizarro's skeleton, I was disappointed in nothing else that I saw in the city

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which he founded. Lima in retrospect slides past the eyes of my mind as a vivid and altogether delightful panorama—the old commingled with the new in just such proportions as appeal to the visitor's imagination and yet provide him with the luxuries and the conveniences which modern taste demands.

You see, it was like this: Lima was one of the first of Latin-American settlements to attain the size and the dignity and the authenticity of a real capital; and it was one of the last of them to surrender the ancient traditions. The Inquisition flourished here after it languished in Spain. The old restful indifference to outside influences, the old respect for the backward, cumbersome institutions of a shadowy antiquity lingered on after a quickening spirit came to Santiago and Valparaiso, on the south of her, and to Buenos Aires and Rio, slantwise across the continent from her.

Traces of this ancient slothfulness, this veneration for what is gone and generally outlawed, still may be discerned in out-of-the-way corners. For instance, Lima is the only major city of South America that still supports the bullfight. Just about the time we arrived, the principal bullfighter of Lima was being disciplined. He bit an obnoxious critic who had written disparagingly of his art, and while he was trying to bite somebody else in order to take the taste out of his mouth—a perfectly natural desire which any playwright or any novelist who has had experience of professional reviewers will appreciate—the authorities took his sword and other playthings away from him.

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But the bull ring is dying of dry-rot and for lack of patronage, and about once in so often the proletariat, disappointed by the indifferent sport provided there, tear up the benches and set fire to the wooden amphitheater. Sunday afternoons the crowds preferably go to a magnificent race course; and the numerous fields in and about the city where young athletes play at association football draw their thousands upon thousands of spectators also. Sport—the sort of sport in which youth takes part rather than sits to watch paid gladiators perform—has taken an enormous part in refashioning the habits and the modes of thought in South America.

The influence of sport first, and next the influence of the Yankee-made moving-picture film—these, I gather, have been the greatest factors for remaking sentiment and fashion among these Latin brethren of ours. Lima, though, refuses to become commonplace. Her underlying patterning is all her own.

Here the awakening may have come tardily but it came with a rush once it got under way. In this revivification the North American and the European capitalists who pioneered the development of the country's resources had a considerable hand, but from what dispassionate observers told me, I would say that a certain individual who weighs less than a hundred pounds and stands about five feet two in his high-heeled boots is the person deserving of the greatest measure of praise for the stabilizing of the government, the adornment and beautification of the city itself, and finally the creation of a most ambitious program for improved education, for sanita-

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tion and hygiene, for road-building and for the economic and intellectual emancipation of his people.

It is merely another indictment of Yankee insularity that while all of us have read about Mussolini and most of us can tell offhand who Lloyd George is or Cecil Rhodes was, the name of A. B. Leguia, President of Peru, remains unfamiliar to the masses of us. Here is one of the outstanding empire-builders of the age, a statesman whose personal history is astounding and fascinating, whose record of vision and of accomplishment in ten years has been stupendous—and even so, millions of us probably never heard of him.

It was Leguia who secured United States naval officers to train his sailors, German military sharps to school his soldiers, and Spanish experts to drill his police forces. It was Leguia who, out of a meager treasury, found funds to inaugurate a plan of public highways which would do credit to a country ten times as rich as his, and which, being completed, is going to form an essential link in the continuous road that, as sure as you're alive, will one of these days bind southern Chile to northern Canada and make it possible to motor uninterruptedly the habitable length of the Western Hemisphere.

It was Leguia who dreamed dreams of railroads, of colonization of the empty interior, of proper drainage for the cities, of enlarged irrigation for the rainless coast, and, most of all, of the social and material rehabilitation of the Indian as a real factor in the national life by means of a more equitable distribution of the land—and he is making most of these dreams of his come true. Since

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his return to the presidency in 1919, he has crowded a lifetime of monumental achievement into the compass of a decade, always against strong political opposition and strong economic prejudices, plus, as he himself has said publicly, "the inertia of our temperament."

Naturally, I was anxious to meet this big little man of South America. That highly efficient and practical veteran of diplomats, Alexander Moore, arranged the meeting—arranged it by telephone in a couple of minutes. The interview took place on one of those frequent days when President Leguia sits to give personal audience to any of his constituents who have a grievance or think they have—the widow of a soldier whose pension has been delayed, the peon who complains of mistreatment—in short, anybody however humble or obscure who desires to ask for something or suggest something or demand something. But when Ambassador Moore and I informally were ushered into the Executive Palace, there was no suggestion that His Excellency might be pressed for time.

What there is of Leguia is all whipcord and drawn steel. He made me think of a dynamo packed inside the case of a wrist watch. Out of what Peru's ninety-odd-pound giant said, several utterances stood out in my memory as having particular significance.

He said this: "Our Indians always from the coming of the white man have been underfoot. They have become a broken people, a people without spirit. I want my administration to give them aspiration, courage, hope—but, most of all, hope. Because hope means faith and

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faith means performance and performance means salvation.

"Not long ago we paved a road leading back into a district inhabited almost exclusively by an Indian populace. In the year before that road was rebuilt, one thousand bags of potatoes came over it to market. In the year since it was rebuilt, one hundred thousand bags of potatoes came over it—an increase in one community of a thousand percent.

"To do such things as this we could not count on the support of the collective conscience of the nation, for a truly collective conscience has not yet formed, although it is forming. We have had to go against the currents of popular opinion rather than with them. But in our campaigns for good roads we found aid in an unexpected quarter.

"Do you know what has helped to awaken our people to the imperative necessity of decent highways? It might interest you to know. All classes of our people patronize the cinema. On the screen they saw fine cars flitting over smooth highways, bearing well-dressed persons swiftly from place to place. In remote neighborhoods the demand arose for such North American roads as our citizens saw pictured in the theater."

Again he said: "Certain atavic superstitions inherent in our race have operated against us. With these fetishes, as with more tangible and definite oppositions, we have had to contend. We have had to give honor and dignity to work, to make men feel that honest labor honestly performed pays dividends where vain oratory and the music

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of fine meaningless words pay none. We have had to break down barriers that hedged in an almost feudalistic group, a land-owning aristocracy which feared the loss of its ancient privileges, without undermining the financial fabric of this country—and that has been no inconsiderable task, either.”

And in conclusion he said:

“Here at least is one South American country which whole-heartedly is friendly to the United States. There may be others who are genuinely friendly to you. I know we are. We are grateful for the enormous aid in development of our resources which in the past has come to us from the North where you live. We need the money you are lending us and the constructive brains you are sending us. We welcome the investors and the organizers who come here. The bugaboo of ‘Yankee Imperialism’ does not frighten Peruvians.

“And let me add this: I am honestly convinced that the anti-American propaganda which flourishes in some of the geographical divisions of this continent is not a spontaneous propaganda but is inspired and financed by certain of your business rivals in other parts of the world—in short, by those who are jealous and resentful of your growing commercial relations with these republics down here below the equator.

“Here in Peru we are greedy to have better acquaintance with you North Americans. I hope that in turn North Americans increasingly may desire to know what we have to offer in entertainment for the visitor and in opportunities for development. There is a profound

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ignorance on both sides. In some ways we are very close together—North and South America—and in other ways we still seem so far apart. Well, we must cure all that.”

I cannot put it too forcibly: If you are seeking for what is engaging in the life of a people or for what is fecund in auguries of big things coming or yet bigger things to come afterward, or for what is heavy with promise for an infinitely richer development of artistic and creative impulses than that people heretofore has experienced, Lima, I'm sure, will satisfy you.

Yes, I'll use a stronger word: I'm sure Lima will enthrall you. You must come to realize here as you will come to realize almost anywhere else in Peru, or in South America, that the wealth of the land both on the cultural side and the material side hardly has been tapped.

You hear the breathing of only half-awakened giant forces, some still entombed in the earth, some already sharpening the creative faculties of the race. Mañana-land no longer is content to drowse in the sunshine. The old Land of Do-It-Tomorrow is transforming into the new Land of Start-It-Today.

I'm not trying to be epigrammatic. Here on the West Coast the chances for rich and previously untapped markets for Yankee-made goods are obvious even to a man who is himself not concerned with business affairs. So many elements contribute to the agreeable situation—the fact that the cultural influence of Europe is not so overwhelmingly strong as on the Atlantic side; the fact

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that, generally, the people are less suspicious of North American ideals than are some of their easterly neighbors; the fact that so much accessible territory still awaits the commercial developer; any number of lesser facts.

Here, for example, is one possibility for expansion which was outlined in my hearing by a distinguished international authority on industrial relations.

It has been claimed that in our own country the automobile market is nearing the point of saturation. The South American cities are crowded with Yankee-made automobiles also, but the countryside lacks good highways. Once you pass beyond the city suburbs, you encounter indifferent dirt roads. Increase the facilities for traveling and the demand for cars increases in proportion.

Out of a very high quarter, the suggestion has been advanced that if the automobile interests of the United States could see their way clear to financing bond issues for the building of adequate systems of linked-up highways in such a country as Peru, for instance, their underwriting activities would be welcomed by the government; the interest payments and the ultimate retirement of their bonds would be guaranteed, and the market for their products would be greatly enlarged.

That is merely one concrete and specific illustration as drawn from a great conglomerate of merchandising opportunities. Already we sell to South America nearly all its automobiles and many of its purely utilitarian appliances and structural supplies and manufacturing equipment. Some judges who are conversant with the

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needs of the South Americans think that we could sell the West Coasters the bulk of their ready-made garments, their luxuries, their articles of convenience and adornment, provided our manufacturers in increasing number would send thither representatives endowed with the patience and the tact to study the prospective buyers' commercial ways and customs.

We bade the Peruvian mainland a reluctant adieu after we had seen Arequipa, down the shore line a short two-days' run from Lima. On its own merits Arequipa is distinctly worth while. To reach it, you must go into the harbor of Mollendo, where you board a train, and for one hundred and seven miles until you come to Arequipa, seven thousand feet and more above sea level, you climb up, up the haunches of the mountains on a breath-taking journey.

Scenically, every inch of it has something to offer—plains as bleak as Sahara, cultivated valleys as green and rich as Eden's garden, yawning canyons most brilliantly mottled; snow-polled peaks, distant glistening glaciers, wide stretches like the Painted Desert; and at the last Arequipa, a quaint town, an old-fashioned town, a very Spanish town which is snuggled into a verdant dimple on the pocked cheek of the Andes, with the exquisitely symmetrical Mount Misti at its back, and almost equally beautiful and equally impressive mountains to right and to left, and, on beyond, still other mountains past counting.

Before you get there you meet the justly renowned

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walking and talking sand dunes of La Joya. This feature alone was worth the price of admission.

Here is a considerable plateau floored with a coarse brownish lava grit too heavy to be stirred by ordinary winds, and scattered over this surface are countless heaps of light, ash-colored sand. In size they vary from babies no more than five feet tall and perhaps thirty feet across, to big fellows that tower twenty feet aloft and measure one hundred feet from tip to tip. You must measure them from tip to tip because every dune is a perfect crescent.

It is so shaped for the reason that the breezes blow always from a given direction, with the result that the grains are constantly being stroked up the convex side and over the crest to drift down the hollowed side of the half-moon. And they travel, all of course in the same direction, at a rate of from forty to sixty feet per annum or a trifle faster than a Canal Zone bell-hop. Sometimes, especially at dawn, there is heard a sound like the noise of far-away drums, and that is the voice of billions of particles eddying along these *medanos*.

At Arequipa we met the first llamas we'd ever seen outside a menagerie. You know—you must know—the marvelous fact about the llama? Put exactly a hundred pounds of weight upon him and he carries it all day without a murmur. Put one extra ounce—one puny, trifling ounce—more than that hundred pounds on his patient back and he lies right down in his tracks and hopes he may die if he'll move an inch until the load is lightened. There is only one drawback to this evidence

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of a poor dumb beast's incredibly accurate sagacity, and that is that there isn't a dog-goned word of truth in it.

Arequipa being so Spanish in practically all its outward aspects, Palmer thought we ought to show our familiarity with the customs of the motherland overseas. He said in southern Spain when you meet some pretty girls it was regarded as the proper thing to address a flowery compliment to them; he said they expected it and were disappointed if you failed to utter it. He recalled one favorite remark: "Blessed be the mothers that bore you!" So we picked out a couple of handsome candidates and said it together in our best Spanish.

But the thing was a total failure. The young ladies' expressions showed that they were still being bored.



Phantom Fingerprints

By Rex Beach



IF I didn't know better, I'd swear Big John Dillon was alive," Inspector Kane declared in some irritation.

His two companions, who were examining a collection of fingerprint records and photographs, looked up and one of them nodded. The inspector sat in frowning silence for a while before he went on.

"I've never seen one of these super-criminals we read about but Dillon was the nearest. I've often wondered why he wasn't written up."

"Yeah! These penny-a-liners love that stuff. The way they solve the most terrifying crime mysteries is no trouble to 'em. What d'you say we turn this one over to the Park Row master minds?" The speaker, Harley Baker, a lieutenant of detectives, smiled sarcastically.

"How does this fellow remind you of Dillon?" inquired the third member of the group, Joe Larned by name. He was an alert man of about thirty-five; it was beside his desk that the others sat. Larned had the rank

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of acting captain and for the past two years he had been in charge of the Bureau of Criminal Identification, a position calling for unusual intelligence and executive ability.

"Technique, for one thing," the inspector told him. "Big John was stronger than a bull and nimble as a cat; he worked alone and he never stole anything except cash and jewels."

Baker nodded again. "Which certainly fits this yegg like a pair of tights. He could have cleaned up in vaudeville, juggling dumb-bells and breaking chains. All he needed was a leopard skin. And he could have cleaned us dicks, too, what I mean! Smart bird! You bet *he* never left any fingerprints on his jobs."

Kane spoke again. "Big John's record is still in the files—anyhow, it used to be. We kept it as a curiosity."

"Strange that he quit second-story work for a bank job and blew himself up. That wasn't so smart." Larned was speaking.

"Oh, Big John got ambitious, I suppose! Wanted to reach the top."

Kane relighted the cigar he had been chewing and waved his match at Larned's desk. "What's strange to me is that with all you've got to go on you can't get any sort of a line on this new guy."

"We've got no record of him here. Neither have any of the big cities. Maybe he's some amateur."

"If he is, heaven save us from the pros!" said Kane.

"We'll get him," Baker predicted confidently as he

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resumed his microscopic examination of the photographs on the desk.

It was a quiet night at 240 Centre Street and for the third time in as many days Kane had come downstairs to the Bureau of Criminal Identification to discuss with its most skillful experts certain robberies which had been growing in importance week by week. Larned's department, with its elaborate equipment of filing cabinets in which reposed the indexed and cross-indexed records of New York's vast underworld of crime, was comparatively deserted at this hour. With the exception of a couple of men at high desks in the rear, the inspector and his two principal aides had it to themselves.

Truth to say, these robberies were important enough to call for exercise of the best brains in the department, for there had been several of them and they were much alike. They had assumed unusual significance when the residence of Danforth Moore, a wealthy citizen on the upper East Side, had been entered and ransacked with a loss of more than twenty thousand dollars. The thief had gained entrance to the premises by lowering himself from the roof and forcing an upper window, a feat calling for strength, agility and daring of a high order.

Later the house of James Merkle, one of the city's wealthiest men, had been burgled in much the same manner and the loss had been even heavier. Only two nights ago the Oswald mansion at Wheatley Hills had been rifled of approximately thirty thousand dollars in cash and precious stones.

In every instance the police had found fingerprints

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which they had dusted and photographed, proving that the same hand had left them. What seemed amazing was that a burglar as skillful as this one appeared to be should prove so careless as to leave such clues behind him. It bespoke the amateur indeed.

Out of the several perfect prints taken from the scenes of the crimes a complete right-hand set had been assembled and Larned had classified it in the usual manner. This had enabled him to turn with certainty to his files. But he had failed to identify the criminal. The markings were so extraordinary as to put them in a class almost of their own; nevertheless, there was no duplicate of them either in the New York Department or in the departments of the leading cities to which he had wired.

Aside from the value of the loot already taken, the wealth and standing of the robber's victims lifted this crime series out of the ordinary. That which worried Inspector Kane and his subordinates tonight was the practical certainty that it would continue. The trio were still racking their brains over the matter when a uniformed man entered to advise Larned that a Doctor Peters was calling.

A visitor at this hour of night was unusual but Larned told his chief:

"Here's a piece of luck. This Peters is a character. He's nutty but he's something of a criminologist. As a matter of fact I've consulted him once or twice. What do you say if we take him in on this thing?"

Kane agreed readily enough and a few moments later the doctor appeared.

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"Come in and join a circle of heavy thinkers," was Larned's hearty greeting. "But first—what brings you downtown at this ungodly hour?"

"I'm trying to find my way home from Brooklyn. Thought maybe we could ride uptown together." The speaker was a heavy-set man of about Larned's age: his cheek bones were high, his face was square and dark and a pair of feverish eyes peered out from beneath bushy brows. It was a strong, a rugged, a passionate face, that lighted up with interest when its owner noted what lay on Larned's desk. As he shook hands with Kane and Baker he smiled and said: "At it again, I see. Don't you ever give the poor crooks a rest?"

The inspector wagged his head. "It's us coppers who never get any rest. Rotten business! Nothing in it. Joe says you're a kind of Sherlock Holmes. Is that right?"

"I'm nothing of the sort. Crime interests me, in an academic way, because it's so easy."

"Easy?"

"It must be, judging from the blockheads who follow it. I'm fascinated by the opportunities it offers to a man of intelligence. Sometimes I wish I'd gone in for it."

Kane smiled a trifle bleakly. "You consider crooks a dumb bunch, eh? Or—maybe you put in with the general public and think we're half-witted?"

"No, no! I merely suspect that a man with a trained mind, a scientist, for instance, could make crime pay better than—well, better than chemistry, which happens to be my line. Unfortunately, we're taught to believe that honesty is the best policy. We read it in our copy books

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and we accept it as gospel. Foolish, isn't it, when it may be the very poorest policy for some men?

"Generalizations are dangerous. Virtue and vice are the results of conditioning. Happily for you fellows the human mind has an antipathy for new ideas and the average man runs straight because he was headed in that direction. . . Now then, what's the heavy thinking about? What's the problem that calls for aid?"

"We've got a sort of super-burglar on our hands, and we can't identify his fingerprints."

"A super-burglar who leaves an autograph?" The doctor lifted his thick brows incredulously.

"That's one thing that puzzles us. We've made up a complete right-hand set, but so far it hasn't helped us in the least."

Casually Peters examined the photographs on his friend Larned's desk, while the latter told him about the several robberies. As the story took shape the doctor's interest deepened.

"What stumps us is that an expert could have remained unknown," Larned concluded.

"Why call him an expert? Anybody can rob a house. How much has he taken?"

"Close to a hundred thousand dollars."

"And all you have against him is those prints?"

"Best evidence in the world, doctor."

"H'm-m! Yes and no. I've never believed altogether in them. Too perishable, for one thing. A swipe of a handkerchief and the source of your evidence is gone.

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By the way, I can improve your technique considerably in that respect."

"How?"

"I've worked out a process of my own to develop and fix a print permanently so that it won't rub off. Yes, and I can bring out the markings much better than you do."

"Really?" Kane was interested. "We could use that. There ought to be money in it for you, too."

The doctor shook his head. "Too limited in its use. I'll make Joe a present of it. No, a scientist can't cash in on a thing like that, and when he works out a discovery of commercial importance some big capitalist steals it for his own profit.

"Take this Henry Oswald, for instance. The biggest thief in America! He has robbed a dozen fellows like me—robbed 'em of their ideas. I went to him once on a certain matter, and I know. Pardon me if I don't dissolve in tears at the loss of his diamond cuff links."

Baker, who had listened in silence, now spoke up. "This new porch-climber is a ringer for a famous crook we had a few years ago by the name of Dillon."

"I remember him," Peters nodded.

"Same line of work. Same peculiar technique. We can usually recognize a criminal by the way he goes about his job, but——"

"If he's Dillon's double, as you say, their fingerprints are probably alike."

"Yeah?" Baker looked interested but incredulous.

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"I've a theory that people wear their life stories on their finger tips."

"You mean—like the bumps on their heads?"

"Phrenology is a fake! Skull bumps have nothing to do with the brain inside. Neither is there anything in the other methods of personality reading, so called. Graphologists, head-hunters, skin-scratchers—fakes, all of them!

"But the microscopic lines on a human finger are traced by something other than chance; they're more than skin-deep. Destiny put them there. Remove the epidermis and they'll return, again and again; criminals have tried sandpaper and it doesn't work.

"I venture to say there's a complete and an indelible biography written in those little whorls and loops and tents you look at through your microscopes if you only knew how to read them. For instance, Dillon, you say, had strongly marked characteristics; he was an outstanding figure. If your Mr. X is so much like him, and the facts indicate that he is, then I'll wager their prints would look pretty much alike if it were possible to compare them."

Larned rose from his chair, saying: "You're about to witness a Spencerian tragedy, doc: a deduction killed by a fact. Fortunately, Dillon's papers are still in our morgue and here goes to kick your infant theory in the shins." He crossed the room and entered an enclosure of heavy woven wire which contained batteries of steel cabinets reaching to the ceiling.

Kane spoke with a faint smile of amusement. "If you

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can read personality that way, doctor, you're a lot smarter than we are."

"I don't say that I can," the scientist protested, "but that doesn't disprove my contention. Human knowledge is limited and——"

"Don't hedge! I string with Joe and I'll lay you eight to five these two records won't classify within a mile of each other. That's a wild guess, of course, but—there never were two prints alike. I mean two full sets. No, not even a right or a left hand.

"I suppose it's conceivable that two index fingers or two thumbs might have similar loops or whorls—enough alike to fool an amateur—but we work with sets of five and ten fingers. That parlays the improbabilities up into the millions. You're out on a limb, doctor."

"Here we are." Larned returned with a soiled yellow folder in his hand, which he opened. In it reposed a sheaf of standard department blanks containing the record of the late John Dillon, the reports of his arrests, the histories of the sundry crimes attributed to him, together with photographs, fingerprint forms and the like. One of these sheets, darkened by a series of black smudges labeled "Right Hand," "Left Hand," the captain unfolded and spread upon his desk. "The trouble with you scientists is——"

Larned ceased speaking; his eyes widened; his entire body stiffened. Over his face spread a look of amazement and incredulity almost stupid in its blankness. Baker, who was leaning over his shoulder, uttered a startled, wordless exclamation. Kane and Peters pressed forward.

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There was a moment of silence which the inspector broke by declaring:

"That's not Dillon's record." He snatched up the sheet and ran his eyes over it, then he exclaimed: "My Lord!"

Larned retrieved the paper; with a shaking hand he reached for his reading glass and bent over it. When he looked up it was to ask:

"What the devil does this mean?"

"It means that bird is alive," Kane barked. "It can't mean anything else."

In an equally forceful explosion Baker exclaimed: "Alive! I helped to take him up on a shovel. Don't tell me he's alive!"

Still stammering, Kane took the glass from Larned and put his eye to it.

Of the four men Peters was the calmest. Mockingly, triumphantly he spoke to Joe. "You were saying that the trouble with us scientists is—what?"

"Harley's right. Dillon is dead," Kane muttered. "There's no doubt about it."

"Not a bit!" This came from Baker.

In the same tone Peters went on: "Then this discovery indicates that my theory isn't as fantastic as it sounds. It suggests, furthermore, the possibility that the entire method of criminal identification upon which your department is built has blown up like—like Dillon's bomb."

"Ridiculous!" Larned wiped his forehead. "That's absurd. There's some explanation; some mistake."

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"‘Mistake’? What? Where? How?" Kane demanded.

"I'm blamed if I can tell you at the moment, chief."

"Those records are kept under lock and key, aren't they?"

"Certainly."

"They seem to be in order. Who'd tamper with them? And why?"

"I'll swear they're all regular. I—I'm trying to figure this out."

Lieutenant Baker puckered his lips and whistled. "What a pretty story *this* will make for the newspapers."

Kane snapped at him: "It mustn't get out. Doctor, this is Masonic, understand? Buried. Good Lord! I'm getting dizzier by the minute. Why, half the crooks in the penitentiaries would go free if——"

"Precisely. There must be hundreds who are doing time on this kind of evidence. This promises to be an epoch-making evening in the history of crime detection."

Larned scowled at him. "Epoch nothing! There's some obvious answer to it. I can think of a dozen."

"No doubt," the visitor agreed. "On the other hand, if you can't prove beyond question where the 'mistake' came in, I'm wondering if we have the moral right to cover this up. If it is even remotely possible for an innocent man to be convicted on another's fingerprints——"

"I'd sooner believe in ghosts," the captain asserted.

Baker agreed. "Me, too."

"Ghosts!" Peters snorted impatiently. "Inferior

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minds always seek refuge in the supernatural. Joe says he has a dozen explanations. Let's hear 'em."

But for the time being Larned could offer none.

Joe Larned boarded an East Side subway express and settled himself for the ride uptown to Doctor Peters' laboratory. He had put in a busy, almost a sleepless week, and despite his confident declaration that he would succeed, somehow, in accounting for the mystery that had come to light on the evening of Peters' call, he had failed to do so. On the contrary, investigation had only rendered that mystery more bewildering.

It was a relief now to get away from headquarters and to face the prospect of an hour or so with his scientific acquaintance. Peters was erratic, intolerant; his views on many subjects were unsound; nevertheless, he had an active brain, he possessed an extraordinary fund of technical knowledge concerning a thousand unrelated subjects, and Larned invariably felt his own mind quickened and freshened after contact with him.

This was his first visit to the laboratory in some months. He wondered if the doctor had given further thought to this phenomenon. Two identical sets of fingerprints! Impossible! Nevertheless, there they were.

Either Dillon's dead hand had lifted a fortune in gems during the past month or else Nature for once had duplicated that maze of microscopic lines engraved upon the human fingers, and the one supposition was quite as incredible as the other. Larned's tired brain refused to function further. He closed his eyes.

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Nobody would have imagined Doctor Peters' workshop to be a laboratory, for it carried no sign and it stood on the bank of the Harlem River in a neighborhood given over to coal and building-material yards, marine ways, yacht-repairing plants and the like. The structure itself had been erected during the war to serve as an emergency chemical plant of some sort but had fallen into disrepair, and this it was that had enabled the scientist to rent it for almost nothing. Just what kind of work Peters was engaged in Joe had never troubled to inquire but he knew it to be some sort of abstract, and doubtless impractical, research along highly experimental lines.

Peters appeared after a while in answer to Joe's repeated knocks and, recognizing the caller, he welcomed him, led him inside.

The front room, formerly the main office, was equipped like any laboratory: wooden shelves carried rows of big-mouthed bottles, racks of test tubes and miscellaneous paraphernalia; in the center were several tables upon which stood retorts and filter stands and graduates and hydrometers and one thing and another. The place reeked of a hundred pungent, acid odors. Under a cluster of lights was a high-powered microscope; a stream of water gushed into a porcelain sink and near the windows was arranged a row of boxes filled with rabbits, guinea pigs and white mice, all no doubt silent and patient collaborators in the scientist's experiments.

"Glad to see you," Peters declared. "I've been ex-

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pecting you to drop in. Sit down and tell me all about everything."

"Nothing much to tell, doc. We're still at sea, down at my shop. To a fellow who has spent the better part of his life in the study and practice of criminal identification this Dillon affair is like a bad dream. Last night our mysterious robber scooped the entire Kilvain collection of star rubies and sapphires, the finest in the country. You may have read about it in the papers this morning."

"Yes. I assume he left his autograph as usual?"

"In half a dozen places," said Larned. "Kilvain kept his gems under glass and the phantom——"

"Phantom?"

"That's what we call him. He seemed to go out of his way to make things easy for us. We couldn't have procured better prints if he'd stopped in at Centre Street and made 'em under my direction."

"And they're the same as the others?"

"Identical."

"Say, Larned, you were disagreeably certain the other night that you could explain the thing. Can you?"

The captain shook his head. "It occurred to me that there must be a mistake somewhere in our filing system, some substitution of records. That was my first thought. But that's out. I reasoned next that Dillon couldn't have lost his life in that bank bombing. I've checked that, too, and it's all right. We've actually got prints taken from his dead hand. The left was pretty badly mangled but the right was perfect. Well, last night that defunct right

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hand lifted the Kilvain jewels worth over a hundred grand. Laugh that off!"

After a pause the speaker resumed: "You said this case blows up our whole method of criminal identification and I wanted to wallop you. But—I'm blamed if it doesn't threaten to do it. I've been wondering if it's possible that our technique is too crude to reveal all there is in a fingerprint. Are we overlooking minute and microscopic differences?"

"I'm groping around, understand; I'm not even thinking straight. What about that new process of yours which is so much better than ours? For heaven's sake, throw me a rope. I'm sinking."

"Gladly! I'll show you more perfect records than you're able to make with your lampblack and chemist's gray; yes, and I'll bring out details you lose completely, but—that won't change the loops and whorls themselves. I don't see what good it will do you in this instance."

Peters rose and busied himself with several bottles, a test tube and an alcohol lamp.

"The principal value of my method," he went on, "is that it makes the imprint permanent; 'fixes' it. But if two people have fingers exactly the same what's the good of it?" Larned made no answer. "Now then, this stuff should heat slowly, the slower the better. Come here; I want to show you something."

The speaker led the way to a door at the rear of his laboratory and flung it open to reveal a room in which

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were a number of heavy and complicated electrical appliances in process of unpacking and assembling.

"I just got 'em in, and I'm terribly excited," Peters proudly confessed. "Lord! This stuff runs into money; it took every penny I could rake and scrape! What d'you think of it?" The speaker's eyes were shining; his face was alight with eagerness.

"It looks like the death house to me," Larned declared.

Peters grinned. "Well, it's no death chamber. It's a life chamber. Know anything about electricity?"

"Sure! I know enough to retard the spark when I crank my motor."

"This is a broadcasting station. A station to broadcast health, life."

"That sounds crazy enough."

The scientist grunted. "Pasteur, Metchnikoff, the Curies, Röntgen were 'lunatics' at first. Listen, old man, you're a detective and so am I. You've been busy for the past few weeks chasing an evildoer. I'm on the track of a malefactor as mysterious and a million times more dangerous than your housebreaker.

"Your man merely robs; he doesn't kill, and he robs only the rich, which really isn't a serious crime. Robin Hood did that. My villain robs rich and poor; he slays an army of victims and the poorer, the weaker they are, the more merciless he is."

"You're talking about some germ, I presume."

"Exactly. The 'flu germ. I specialized in bacteriology and I'm cursed with a lofty ambition to accomplish

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something worth while in the way of disease control."

"You don't mean you're going to do it by radio?" Larned's incredulous inquiry evoked an impatient gesture.

"Certainly not. I'll have to give you the idea in unscientific language, for police intelligence isn't high. When we suffer an epidemic the air is full of harmful germs and we breathe 'em in. They make us sick, kill us. All right; science has isolated certain other micro-organisms—let's call 'em germs—harmless to us and deadly to them. Certain of these we have learned how to plant directly in the blood; certain others can be breathed into the lungs.

"Very well, I propose to develop hordes of these latter friendly bodies and release them in crowded places. Why not? It's only a step beyond our practice of injecting vaccines with the needle. We broadcast jazz and market reports and cooking recipes, why not broadcast health from our municipal, state and federal health departments? Why not have a scientist like me in the Cabinet as Secretary of Hygiene?"

"Great idea, doc, if it will work. Have you really made any progress?"

"Certainly I have. I'll make more from now on. However, let's get back to our fingerprints." The two returned to the laboratory proper and Peters examined the liquid in the test tube. While he was thus engaged, his caller strolled over to investigate a cage of rabbits but halted before an object which challenged his attention.

It was a glass dome like those used to protect wax

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flowers, and under it was a cunningly and delicately wrought image of a frog. The animal was extraordinarily lifelike; in contour, in coloring, in the texture of the skin it was perfect. Larned had never seen such a startling piece of modeling.

"Say, doc, where did you get this? Japan?" he asked.

Peters smiled. "No. New Jersey."

"Mighty clever piece of work. Wax, isn't it?"

The doctor joined his friend. "Look again. You never saw a model as perfect as that, did you? Well, it isn't wax and it's no model. I caught it in the New Jersey meadows." Lifting the glass he removed the object and laid it in Larned's hand. The latter recoiled, for it was a frog indeed. It was soft and moist and cold to the touch.

"What the deuce——?"

Peters chuckled. "Pretty good, eh? How long d'you think it has been dead?"

"I don't think it *is* dead. It's only sleeping."

"Eight years! Fact. Every bone, every joint, every muscle and tendon works. See!" Peters moved the frog's legs, opened and closed its mouth, its eyelids. "Hardest kind of subject, too. I can preserve a beef carcass, or any part of it, the same way. Here, let me show you something else." He opened a white enameled cabinet and removed therefrom a platter upon which reposed what appeared to be a raw, freshly cut roast of beef. "This piece of meat has been here longer than the frog."

"You don't mean——?"

"I mean if you cooked and ate it today you'd never

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know it hadn't come from the butcher yesterday." Peters' voice rose; stridently he declared: "It will be the same eight years from now, or eighty years. Neither sunlight nor air affects it, and this isn't the result of any embalming process either.

"I merely stop the clock, prevent deterioration, arrest decay—something the wisest men in the world have been trying to do for two hundred generations. The Egyptians came closer to accomplishing it than anybody but they were children compared with me. This is the thing I took to Oswald. He said I was crazy."

"You're a remarkable guy," Larned declared with a curious stare. "How many different things do you dabble in?"

"Dabble!" the other exploded angrily. "I don't dabble; I do! I tower head and shoulders above all the scientists, dead or alive."

"No offense. I——"

"Edison, Marconi, Steinmetz, who are they? I——" Peters lowered his voice and altered his tone. "What's the use of talking to you? Anyhow, I've developed this principle far enough to revolutionize the entire problem of food preservation. It will change the life story of the human race."

"Oswald isn't the only great meat packer in the world."

"No, but he's the bell cow, and the others follow. He's a dirty thief. He built his fortune on ideas he stole from poor devils like me; he wouldn't risk a nickel to help a struggling genius, but he'd spend a fortune to

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cheat the fellow out of the reward for his discovery. That's Big Business. The Behemoths of Industry! I—I'm a Bolshy."

"If your process is original you can patent it," Larned persisted.

"Yes; and throw it open to that pack of robbers!" The speaker scowled ferociously. "They run the Patent Office. The government is in with 'em."

"Nonsense!"

"I know what I'm talking about," Peters insisted stormily. "Didn't Oswald suggest that very thing to me? The old buzzard! But I saw through him. He'd love to get my formulæ and put his chemists at work on 'em. But I fooled him. I called his hand. I told him what he was."

"Did you, really?"

"I certainly did. He said I was a dangerous crank, and had me put out."

"I'm surprised at him," Larned said mildly. "What d'you say we get along with our experiments?"

"Thieving old hypocrite! Jackal! He'll never steal my brains. I'll bring him to his milk." For a moment the scientist muttered, then he shook his massive shoulders and apologized. "Pardon the outburst but—you flaunted a red flag at me and I charged. All right, here we go. I'll put my thumb on each end of a slide and develop one print in the usual manner and one my way. You can compare the results. If they interest you we'll try other substances."

Larned looked on while the speaker dusted one print

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and sprayed the other with the volatile preparation he had compounded, then stroked it lightly with a fine camel's hair brush. When he finally surrendered the slide the captain uttered an exclamation, for the second impression looked as if it had been cut into the glass itself by some fine-pointed stylus. There was a luster, a brilliance to it unlike anything he had ever seen.

"Don't be afraid to touch it," Peters told him. "It's next to indestructible. What's more important, I can fix a print on substances and surfaces you'd never think of tackling. However, it won't help you catch your phantom. You need more than a refined technique in his case. You need an intelligence to match his."

Larned was enthusiastic, delighted; he insisted upon a second demonstration and begged Peters to instruct him not alone in the proper use of atomizer and brush but also in the preparation of the materials. These mastered, he made and fixed prints of his own fingers as well as the scientist's upon glass and upon half a dozen other materials.

"This is great!" he declared finally. "I want to show these to Kane. It will be adopted everywhere, of course. Now then, can't you give me some theory to account for the—the phenomenon?"

After a moment Peters shrugged. "Phenomena are common in my work. Every day I struggle with contradictions of natural law more extraordinary than this. They're all simple enough when we learn to understand them."

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"You surely don't encounter—phantoms?" Larned ventured.

"Physics is my line, not psychics. But so many great discoveries are hidden just beyond the painted veil that I disbelieve in nothing. Take that frog and that piece of beef: perfect after six, eight years. A reversal of every natural law. A true miracle. Who would believe it?

"Isn't that as incredible as—as a phantom? One more step and I'll solve the mystery of death itself. Life and death are mere matters of chemical change. What is one and what is the other?"

"Don't ask me. I'm a policeman."

"Right. And I'm wasting my breath on you, but when I start talking I enjoy hearing myself. I frequently learn something. This life and death! A momentary arrest of the one and the other follows. I've postponed the operation of decay, as you see; I can preserve tissue indefinitely; only the spark within escapes me. Why is that spark so easily quenched and so impossible to rekindle? What is the nature of it?

"I can produce protoplasm—the chemical matter of life—right here in this room and I can make it do everything but live. What is the force that energizes it? I can analyze and divide and subdivide matter clear back to the ultimate atom, but having done so I'm as ignorant as ever. The secret of the universe dangles just out of my reach.

"Frustration! You're having a taste of it; I get it every day. If I weren't a man of extraordinary mentality

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I'd crack. Sometimes I get so furious at my limitations that I beat my head and smash things.

"No, I can take the heart out of a living body and keep it beating for a considerable time, but once the beat stops I can't start it again. Why? Nothing of weight or of substance has gone out of it; no chemical change has occurred. Bah! This problem of yours isn't half as bewildering as any one of a hundred problems in chemical research."

"Then explain it, if you're so infernally smart."

But the speaker ran on unheeding: "You talk about phantoms. If you knew more you'd realize that when we trace the physical back far enough it invariably leads into the metaphysical—the material into the immaterial. Take this very mystery of life.

"The smallest known molecule weighs three million-million-million-millionths of a gram, but it travels a mile every second. Back and forth, so! An electron is smaller and travels faster and yet it is less mysterious to an analytical chemist than a sunflower seed. Why does one speck of protoplasm grow into a plant and another into a police captain or—or a superior man like me?"

"Are you delivering a lecture on science or preaching a sermon?" Larned inquired with a smile. "I'm a square-toed cop holding down a desk. What I want to know is who made those dead fingerprints and how. Go ahead and play ball with your atoms and your molecules to your heart's content. I'm chasing a two-hundred-pound burglar and if he isn't caught I'm likely to lose my job. I was hoping you could give me a lift."

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"Use your brains," the chemist snapped.

"You claim I haven't any."

"Humph! I'm poor at flattery. Prove me wrong and I'll apologize."

"What a swell crutch you turned out to be," Larned said as he rose. "However, I'm certainly grateful for this new process, if you really mean——"

"Take it. Use it. To the devil with it! I'll drop in once in a while to keep in touch with your little mystery."

The weeks following that visit to the laboratory were the most troubled that Joe Larned had experienced during all his years on the force. Those baffling robberies continued with monotonous regularity, and although there were the usual clues little could be made of them and the Bureau of Criminal Identification came in for its share of criticism.

The time came when something like a panic overtook the department. Word was passed that action was imperative and if results were not soon forthcoming there would be a shake-up.

So far only Kane and a handful of his trusted men knew anything about those phantom fingerprints, but it was a matter of general knowledge that the spoils of the "Who's Who" robberies were mounting into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The newspapers began to ask what ailed the police. Editorials hinting at a partnership between the Law and the Underworld were printed.

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Peters was an interested observer of these events and despite the patent contempt in which he held police methods, police intelligence, he nevertheless stopped in at Centre Street after every new crime to examine with genuine curiosity the newest fingerprints and to apprise himself of developments. Inasmuch as his process was now being used by the department this interest was natural. He was shown such clues as there were and the case was discussed with him.

He turned out to be, upon better acquaintance, a decided eccentric. He was enormously egotistical but his conceit was so ingenuous, so boyish that it was not unduly offensive.

In his own mind he was a superman, an intellectual giant whose scientific knowledge began where that of others ended, and this, in view of his abysmal obscurity, his total failure to win public recognition, was the more amusing. He was childishly susceptible to flattery, yet he was suspicious even of his friends.

His absurd self-importance was at complete variance with his reasonless distrust of everybody—a queer complex which amounted almost to a fixation. He was firmly convinced, for instance, that the world was in league not only to steal the fruits of his labor but also to discredit him, and Larned, who had confidence in the fellow's ability, tried vainly to argue this conviction down.

But such efforts merely served to set him off on another fantastic denunciation of his imaginary enemies, the overlords of finance. If they suspected the success he had attained in his experiments with food preservation

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they would never rest until they had despoiled him of his secret, so he declared. Those buccaneers of Big Business would not hesitate to take his life to get at it, and rather than build up their fabulous fortunes he would let it die with him.

Larned laughed at such talk. "That canned frog of yours looked good to me and I've an idea there's a fortune in it, but if you want to cut off your nose to spite that ugly face of yours it's your business. Your health-broadcasting idea I don't think much of."

"You wouldn't! It's over your head. But the big men in the medical profession are beginning to wonder what I'm up to. If they suspected that I've isolated the influenza germ, they'd never let me get away with it."

"Why not?"

"Numskull! They've been working on the same thing for years. Think they'd let me get the credit? Of course it would put the doctors out of business, so I'd expect them to fight it, but—say! You're one of the fools who think doctors try to stamp out disease. Do lawyers try to end crime? Use your head."

"If you've really got something, why don't you go to a research foundation?"

"They're all in together: doctors, hospitals and drug makers. They're legalized murderers, the whole kit and kaboodle of them. I call it the Disease Trust. But leave them to me; I'll make them eat crow. I know what I'm doing."

Larned gave up. Plainly this fellow, despite his un-

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doubted ability, was more than a little bit "touched." Disease Trust! Legalized murderers!

It was Larned's habit to change the blotter on his desk every week. He used the customary leather-bound pad, about two feet square, and it held six sheets. One morning as he removed the last one in order to turn it over he saw on the smooth inner surface of the pad itself a black smudge which he never had noticed before.

Plainly it was the impression of an inked finger tip and with a queer, sick feeling in the pit of his stomach he recognized its peculiar whorls. He had studied those markings long enough now to know them at a glance.

For a moment he sat frozen; then mechanically he unfolded his magnifying glass and peered through it. Out of that intricate tracery of minute lines the Phantom seemed to leer at him, and his scalp tingled.

Then he cursed under his breath; his face grew black. This was the limit. On second thought there was nothing so mysterious about this thing, for it lay close to the edge of the pad, indicating that some visitor had lifted the bottom blotter, inserted an index finger underneath and deliberately rolled it. Rolled it, to make identification plainer! That much was patent from the rectangular shape of the print.

Larned's muscular fist clenched itself. Here was more than a mocking gesture; this spelled defiance.

Big John Dillon's double actually had called on him and had left his signature just as he had left it at the scenes of his crimes. No accidental clue this; it had been planted. But why?

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Larned strode into Kane's office, his eyes smoldering, and the inspector inquired:

"Hello! What's burning you up?"

"I've had a call from our phantom burglar."

"Huh?"

"He's been in my office and left his index-finger-print."

Kane's chair creaked as he fell back in it. He listened silently as Larned told him of his discovery, then flung the blotter pad down before him.

"This—gives me the creeps," Kane confessed as he stared stupidly at the inky mark.

"That pad holds six blotters and I turn one every three or four days. I'm certain it wasn't there when I filled it last. That means the print was made sometime within the last six weeks."

"Hell's bells! Dillon is dead." Kane's protest sounded petulant, almost hysterical.

"Listen, chief! I've heard that until I'm fed up with it. *This* guy isn't dead. He's alive and he's thumbing his nose at me. Confound him!"

After a moment Kane said: "I guess it's time we came clean to the Big Chief. He's wild and I'm due at his office at eleven for a scolding. That society mob he runs with are getting the jumps and they're gunning for him. He says—"

The speaker leaned forward suddenly, snatched up his desk calendar and began swiftly to turn back its pages.

"S-a-ay! A week or so ago I noticed a fingerprint on

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this thing. Never thought anything about it until—— Here it is. Good *Lord!*” On the white leaf exposed was another print, a duplicate of the one on Larned’s pad.

The men eyed each other silently.

Later that morning Kane entered the Bureau of Criminal Identification and announced to Larned:

“Well! The commissioner has had his. When I told him the Dillon story and what happened this morning he looked kind of queer. Then he went into his desk and dug out three letters he has received recently—three blank sheets of paper, each with five fingerprints on it. Dillon’s! He had assumed they were Black Hand warnings.”

“Any clues?”

“None. Addressed on a typewriter, posted at Times Square. Here’s another bit of news. Several police reporters and some of the city editors have received the same sort of thing. Say, Joe! We’ve often wondered why our man works with a glove on his left hand, or at least why he leaves nothing but right-hand prints. I—I suppose you know that Big John’s left hand was badly mangled, practically blown off?”

Kane put the question in a tone which proved that he could not rid himself of the conviction that unholy forces were at work in this case. To his subordinate, however, the query seemed to open a new line of thought. He frowned.

“Sure, I know all that. It’s a queer case, but the queerest thing is the motive back of it.”

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"Motive? Why, robbery, of course. The guy is on his way to a million."

Larned shook his head. "I don't agree with you. Did you ever do any wrestling, chief?"

"A little."

"Then you know that often the best way to break a hold is to roll with your man. It's plain to me that this bird wants to get his name in the papers—everything goes to show it. We've played our game; now let's play his. What d'you say if we give him some publicity and see what happens?"

"I don't know. I'll put it up to the Big Boy. If he says go ahead we will."

That afternoon the police commissioner called a dozen or more reporters into his office and told them frankly all there was to tell about this modern Raffles who had terrified the wealthy residents of the entire metropolitan district. He showed them actual fingerprints and photographs of others, all taken at the scenes of the "society robberies"; he let them examine Larned's desk pad, Kane's calendar and the sheets of paper he himself had received through the mail. Then, as a climax, he produced the department file with its record of Big John Dillon, dead now these several years.

Some of these very reporters, by the way, had covered the Traders Bank bombing and had seen the corpse of the giant yegg; others, like the commissioner, had recently received mysterious fingerprints, identical with these on exhibit. It takes something out of the ordinary to stir police reporters, but these men were astounded.

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That evening and the next morning the newspapers carried black headlines. New York, in fact the entire country, gasped and rubbed its eyes; this story, vouched for by the metropolitan police commissioner, created a sensation.

Of course a dozen biographies of Big John Dillon were hastily written and eagerly devoured by the public. They made quite a hero out of the dead man.

"This hokum sickens me," Lieutenant Baker growled one day as he flung a story of this sort on Larned's desk. "I knew him and he was just a big bum."

"What became of his body?"

"A bunch of his pals claimed it, but there was some trouble. I forget just what did happen. Anyhow, they let up a squawk and we fanned 'em out."

"Where was it buried?"

Baker shrugged. "I don't even know if it was buried. But cap, you don't have to dig him up to prove he was cooled. I've told you a thousand times he was all torn to bits. I'm overfed on this case; it gives me the heebies. If we're ever going to catch this baby there's only one way to do it."

"How?"

"Plant a bull in the home of every rich man in the city and lay for him. Give 'em riot guns and order 'em to shoot first and then say, 'Hands up!'"

Larned waved the suggestion aside. "There's an easier and a simpler way to get him, Harley. Outsmart him."

"Ah-h!" Baker lifted his brows. "Just like that, eh? And who's going to do it?"

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"I believe I can."

"Say! You certainly care for yourself, cap. I bet you been reading a book—some detective story. *You* outsmart him! You and who?"

"Harley, it's the commonplace crimes that are baffling; the more extraordinary they are, the easier they should be to unravel."

"Yeah? Well, if you outthink this bozo, you can write your own detective yarn. Why, I bet the commissioner'll haul off and ask you to take his desk."

Larned smiled faintly. He knew Baker too well to resent his sarcasm. Quietly he said: "I may be wrong but one thing sure, if there's thinking to be done in this department I'll have to do it."

About three o'clock one morning some ten days thereafter the telephone at the head of Larned's bed rang and its alarm brought him out of his dreams instantly. He was fully awake; his brain was functioning even before he heard the voice on the other end of the wire saying:

"Hello! Captain Larned? Matthews speaking. There's been another robbery."

"Whereabouts?"

"Metropolitan Museum."

"*What?*"

"Metropolitan Museum. It's the Phantom again. Biggest job yet. He got away with the Schwartz Collection of antiques. They've found a lot of fingerprints."

"Rush Hobart up right away. I'll meet him there."

Hobart, with his camera and equipment, was waiting

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when Joe arrived at the Museum; methodically they went to work.

That morning at breakfast New York was shocked by the greatest sensation it had received in connection with this whole series of "phantom robberies." The Metropolitan Museum! The Schwartz Collection of priceless relics, among which were the jewels and ornaments of kings dead these four thousand years! All gone! Stolen! Possibly destroyed! The city was stupefied.

While this was happening, Joe Larned sat at his desk examining a dozen or more photographs of the various prints taken that morning. Listlessly he ran over them, knowing only too well what they would show, or rather what they would conceal.

Meanwhile he marshaled his facts and checked them over. To him they spelled a straight story and he had no doubt they would convince Kane and the Big Chief, but just what a jury would make of them or what weight as legal evidence they would carry he was uncertain.

So far he had worked on pure hypothesis. Strictly speaking, he had no actual evidence, no single bit of positive, concrete proof; nothing but a line of reasoning. If only——

At one of the photographs he looked again; he bent closer over his magnifying glass and a sound issued from his lips. These prints had been developed and fixed by the Peters process; they were marvelous as to detail and so clear-cut that enlargement by a hundred or by five hundred diameters would merely emphasize their perfect definition. What Joe saw now made his heart leap.

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Evidently the Phantom had lacerated his thumb, or cut through the skin at least, for the photograph showed a triangular tear the flap of which had been turned back. There were two such pictures taken at different places in the Museum and Joe studied them intently, compared them. His hand shook when he opened a drawer in his desk and ran through the contents.

He was bent over his reading glass when his telephone rang.

"Hello, cap! This is Peters. Is that true about the Metropolitan?"

"Sure."

The doctor uttered an exclamation. "Any clues?"

"No. Nothing more than usual."

"This just about blows the lid off, doesn't it?"

"I'll say so."

"When can I see you?"

Larned smiled grimly. "The sooner the better. Come quick. I may be pounding a beat by afternoon."

"I'll be there in an hour."

The hour passed and another thirty minutes dragged by. Larned, Lieutenant Baker and the police commissioner himself were in Kane's office anxiously waiting. The commissioner said irritably:

"Don't you think we'd better send out an alarm? It begins to look as if——"

"He'll be here," Larned asserted. "I know him. He's dying to hear all about himself."

"I'm not saying you're wrong, captain, but it's an

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extraordinary theory and your case is a long way from complete."

"Not in my mind. Run over the list of his robberies and see what it spells. Henry Oswald, a packer who turned down his pet process for preserving meat; Martin Kilvain, food products—biggest in the country; Danforth Moore, head of the Chemical Research Foundation; James Merkle, drug manufacturer. They're all people like that, people he has a grouch against. That's what first put me wise."

Kane's telephone rang; he answered it, then announced curtly: "Here he is. On his way up. Baker, he's a strong guy and he's queer; if he starts anything, stop him in his tracks."

Baker nodded; he rose and took a position close to the door, which he opened a moment later at Peters' knock. The newcomer was nonplused at sight of the commissioner and apologized for intruding but the latter said:

"Sit down. We've been waiting for you, doctor, and we'd begun to fear you were going to disappoint us."

Peters shot a startled glance from one to another and seemed to read a message in the four unsmiling faces. He stiffened; muttered something about an invitation from Larned.

"Yes. He got you here under a subterfuge."

"I don't understand—" the scientist began.

"Neither do we, fully. That's why we want to talk over these robberies with you."

Peters scowled; he lifted his eyes to the wall clock,

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then smiled, although with manifest effort, and inquired:

"What is this? An arrest?"

"Precisely."

"Absurd! Arrest—*me*?"

Larned spoke gravely. "Sorry, old man. We're a little slow down here but we're sure. We must seem pretty dumb."

"Insane is the word!" Peters exploded.

Joe went on, heedless of the interruption: "I'll admit I was thick. For a while I actually believed we uncovered Dillon's fingerprints by pure accident. It never occurred to me that you stage-managed the show."

"I can't believe you're in earnest, Joe. This is—fantastic."

"Not more so than your burglaries."

The commissioner agreed. "Yes, doctor, it's by far the queerest case since I took office. Captain Larned has convinced me there's more to it than appears on the surface and he thinks you should have a chance to make a statement. That accounts for the—irregularity of our procedure."

"Am I supposed to break down at this point and confess?" The speaker had regained his composure; his lips curled. "I take it this is the start of your famous 'third degree.' Go ahead; I'm curious to see it function."

"Suit yourself about a confession; we can do without it. What I'd like to know is how you managed to preserve and use the hand of a dead criminal."

"I did that?"

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"Apparently. I'm more than a little curious, and of course the public will share my interest. By the way, your place is being searched and the thing will be found if it's in existence."

"Indeed?" There was both rage and mockery in the word. A moment, then with insolent nonchalance Peters took a seat, crossed his legs and lighted a cigaret. He rolled his eyes over his shoulder at Baker and said: "Don't be nervous. I'm not going to make a break. If I did you couldn't stop me."

Once again he glanced at the clock, then: "Well, commissioner, I'm sorry I can't turn pale for you and break out into goose flesh, but I have neither fear nor respect for you Cossacks. So I'm the phantom burglar! I'm a prisoner and you're going to lock me up. May I ask you how you propose to keep me locked up?"

"They don't often walk out of the Tombs."

"I mean, where's this pickled hand? If you fail to produce it, where's your case? Either this is a mighty poor joke or a desperate bluff."

"Say, doc!" Larned was speaking. "How did you get that expensive laboratory equipment?"

"I bought it."

"But you're broke."

"I bought it on time."

"You paid cash for it."

"Did I?"

"You began buying it soon after the first burglary."

"So I did, Joe. My grandmother died and remembered me in her will. Ask me another."

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"All right. Were you working in the dissecting room at Mercy Hospital when John Dillon's body was taken there?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?"

"I do know. I looked up the record. You removed the right hand——"

"And used it like a rubber stamp!" Peters vented an incredulous snort.

"No. You skinned it out and made a sort of glove out of it."

"How gruesome!"

"Smart idea, and it got my goat for a long while—until you bragged so much about your preservative process. Policemen do have a little intelligence. Last night you tore that glove of yours—and that supplied the link that was missing in my chain. Your fingerprint shows through the tear and, thanks to your own method of development, the markings are clear enough to make identification positive."

"You're outlining a better case than I expected," the prisoner admitted, "but fancy a jury giving ten, twenty years to a man of my character on a bit of circumstantial evidence no bigger than that. They'll think you're framing an innocent man with a double print. Of course if you plant the skin of Dillon's hand in my laboratory and it shows a tear on the thumb to match your——"

"I didn't say on the thumb. I mentioned the fingerprint."

"My mistake."

"No mistake at all. Thumb is right."

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"Thumb or finger, where is it? Where's your one and only exhibit?"

"Say! What the devil made you pull that job at the Museum?" Kane inquired. "You can't sell that stuff."

Before an answer could be made there came a sound of voices and a stir in the anteroom and the prisoner straightened himself in his chair. There was a knock. Kane opened the door to face Henry Oswald, Danforth Moore, Martin Kilvain and several newspaper men.

Kilvain spoke in some agitation. "Hello, inspector! What's all this about my jewels? Somebody phoned my office for me to get down here on the double quick but nobody in the building seems to know anything about it."

"I got the same message," said Moore, "and so did Mr. Oswald. These reporters claim they were tipped off to a big story on the Museum robbery. What has happened?"

Other questions were voiced, but Peters interrupted by calling out: "Come in, gentlemen. I'm the one who telephoned and I've been waiting for you."

Kane whirled upon him angrily but he declared in the same loud tone:

"Now don't get sore. This is just another bit of stage-management."

"I resent your impertinence," the commissioner growled. "Close the door, Kane."

"Resent it, then!" Peters exploded. "Close that door and I close my mouth. I'm ready to talk, but not to you. I propose to speak to these men and to the people of New York."

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Henry Oswald drew attention to himself by saying: "This is extraordinary and I don't get the drift of it but if this man robbed my house I want to hear what he has to say."

"And I mean to have you hear," Peters bellowed. Then to the commissioner: "Understand, I'm not taking matters out of your hands, but—there's half a million dollars in personal property at stake. I defy you to prove I'm your phantom burglar or to recover that property without my assistance. I'm ready to talk, so bring in your stenographers, but I want these reporters to hear me, too. I want everybody."

He waved his arms excitedly. There was an outburst from the newspaper men and the hall began to fill with people attracted by the disturbance.

Followed a scene as strange as any ever witnessed in the domed building on Centre Street. Peters won his point by the very violence of his insistence and Kane's office became almost crowded. The prisoner assumed an air of mingled arrogance and condescension, and began to speak. In spite of the fact that he talked rationally enough, more than one present set him down as mildly mad.

He admitted without preamble that he was the mysterious evildoer but he denied all criminal intent and asserted that his victims themselves had driven him, much against his will, to rob them. Chance had given him the opportunity, several years before, to dissect the hand of a notorious criminal and upon it he had brought to bear the results of certain experiments already well

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along. He had removed the skin and preserved it without thought of putting it to use.

Simply enough, he told about his efforts to adapt his discoveries to commercial use, his successes and his failures, and his story ran straight; his auditors began to realize that this was no lunatic speaking but a man of undoubted scientific attainments.

Here, they began to suspect, was a genius warped and twisted by a sense of injury, poisoned by a resentment so enormous as to dwarf every other feeling in him. How well or how poorly justified was that resentment his listeners could not decide.

"After I had worked out my process and perfected it I realized that I couldn't get anywhere against the combine so——"

"What combine?" Oswald broke in.

"The packers' combine: the food trust. You should know; you're the head of it."

Oswald looked blank; he stuttered: "My dear man, there's no combine, no food trust. If you have discovered a new way to preserve meats, as you claim, every packer in the world will use it."

"Why didn't you say so when I came to see you two years ago? You threatened to have me thrown out."

"Did I?"

"And you"—the prisoner whirled upon Martin Kilvain—"you called me a visionary crank, an idiot. You're all alike: too busy, too well satisfied, too indifferent. Genius beats its brains out on your doorsteps. But I've

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made you take notice! I've stopped New York in its tracks and made it listen to me."

"Go on with your story, doctor," the commissioner directed.

Peters' face reddened. "Don't interrupt me! I'm giving a message to the world, and tomorrow it will kneel at my feet. I've touched on only a part of my work; the biggest is to come."

He glared belligerently at Danforth Moore and barked: "You've put millions into medical research, haven't you? You've got the finest brains of the profession at work. How would you like to see a 'flu germ? Have any of your eminent M. D.'s ever shown you one? No. Well, I'll show you a million."

The speaker laughed harshly. "But I'm not going to show 'em to you! Nor to your subsidized scientists. I know your game. I'm going to show 'em to the world. And I'm going to show the world how to stamp 'em out."

Briefly Peters repeated what he had told Larned long before about his ambition to broadcast antibodies to combat the plague. "I've got it," he crowed. "It'll put your doctors out of business—unless they put me out of business first.

"Show it to them? I guess not. But it took equipment, money, a fortune bigger than I could hope to earn, so I levied a contribution on you fellows who could afford to pay. It was worth the price.

"Yes, I played burglar to get the money for my experiments but I played it in a way to put me on the front page and focus attention on myself. As a climax I rifled

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the Metropolitan. That was the final crack of my whip.

"I came down this morning to give myself up and arranged for you gentlemen to come here. It so happened that Captain Larned forestalled me a bit, but I flatter myself that my story will command the attention it deserves. The doubting Thomases will never discredit my work. Nobody is going to steal my thunder.

"Science is an exacting mistress; she takes much and she gives little. I've put one over on the medical ring and the penalty I pay is a matter of indifference to me.

"Most of the cash I took was spent on apparatus and the like. I hope you'll mark it off as a contribution to a worthy cause, but suit yourselves. The rest of your money, the jewelry and those gewgaws from the Museum are intact.

"Commissioner, I'm obliged to you. I'm now in your hands."

"I'll begin to put some faith in this outlandish story when I see the loot!" Martin Kilvain exclaimed.

"It's in the vault of your bank. And by the way, here's that amusing relic of the late John Dillon." From his pocket Peters took what indeed resembled a flesh-colored glove.

Henry Oswald, who was near him, snatched it and examined it intently; the reporters crowded close. Then Oswald addressed the commissioner:

"The man's a little demented and suffering a silly idea that he's persecuted. All his talk about a food trust and a ring of doctors is poppycock. I've been trying to convince myself that he's a sham but—this isn't a job of

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tanning." He passed the glove on. "He's got something! That's the live skin of a human hand! If he can do that and—and the other things he claims, I'm not going to appear against him."

Moore sided with him. "I can't credit his statement that he has isolated the 'flu germ, it's too incredible, but I'd like to have it looked into. Certainly he's no common criminal and after all he hasn't killed anybody."

"'Killed anybody,'" Peters shouted. "Hell's bells! I've saved a million lives."

Later that day Harley Baker stopped at Larned's desk to say, "Well, that nut made good. The jewels were in the bank, all right."

"I fancied they would be."

"Have you read the papers? Gee! You'd think he was some big hero. D'you know what's going to happen? He'll beat the racket. He'll never do a day. Oswald and Kilvain and that bunch will buy his process and the American Society of Bugology will pin a medal on him." The speaker shook his head. "Tough break for us, to outsmart a guy like that and get no credit for it. This is a rotten business, Joe."

